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## “Learning Discourse”: Learning Biographies, Embedded Speech And Discoursal Identity In Students' Talk : The Learning Discourses Of German Business Studies Undergraduates

### Thesis

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Version: Version of Record

Link(s) to article on publisher's website:

<http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21954/ou.ro.00004dda>

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# **Doctorate in Education – EdD**

**The Open University**

## **Doctoral Dissertation**

**Title:** **'Learning Discourse': learning biographies, embedded speech and discursal identity in students' talk.**  
The learning discourses of German Business Studies undergraduates.

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**Date of Submission: 24.09.2001**

**Viva Voce: Monday 10 December 2001 at Walton Hall, Open University, Milton Keynes, UK**

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## **Abstract**

### **Title:**

'Learning Discourse': learning biographies, embedded speech and discursal identity in students' talk.  
The learning discourses of German Business Studies undergraduates.

*Keywords: discourse, learning discourse, learning biographies, depth-interviews, language corpus, embedded speech, open theorizing*

The main research question of this study is: What discourses of learning and identity do students develop in relation to their individual learning histories, their experience of learning and of knowledge-acquisition in the HE environment, and how critically reflective are students of the positioning enacted through the dominant discourses of the HE environment with particular regard to institutional discourses of academic learning and knowledge?

### **Rationale:**

The university is seen as a significant stage in the development of students' learning histories, of particular relevance for the students' perceptions of self, learning and knowledge. The role of discourses of knowledge acquisition and learning in talk - 'learning discourses' - is examined against the background of general study conditions for students poised between study and work.

### **The case study: methodology and methods**

The dissertation, which is an example of computer-aided qualitative research, describes a small-scale ethnographic study of students at a German university. The researcher adopts a broadly ethnomethodological approach. The data was collected in

a limited number of individual in-depth research interviews to construct a language corpus. Other data regarding the research site was collected via observation and from documentary sources.

Data analysis: the interview transcripts were analysed using a mixture of conversation analysis; institutional discourse(s) analysis and narrative analysis.

Results: the study provides evidence of the production of learning biographies in interview talk. Evidence is also produced in this study of the 'biographization' of students' talk.

The coherence of students' discourse practices in relation to their experience of learning is underlined and the researcher argues that the student respondents negotiate the intrinsic difficulties of asymmetrical institutional talk by deploying a range of discourses, both institutionally-generated as well as individual discourses of resistance and opposition.

The evidence of individual discourse practices provided by the data employed here is seen as a strong argument for a *low-inference approach* to data analysis.

The results produced by analysis of the interview transcripts demonstrate the central importance of heteroglossic elements in talk, - here described as '*embedded speech*' and understood to function as a '*plausibility device*' – in the process of self-expression and the production of own discourse

## Relevance

This research is seen as relevant for university learning strategies, for the appreciation of student self-perception, their discourses of knowledge and resistance to the prevailing 'human capital' discourses of learning, exam success and career orientation of HE study.

## Statement

No material used in, or produced for, this dissertation has been previously submitted for a degree or other qualification of this or any other university or institution **with the exception of** parts of the interview which appear in this dissertation under the changed name of 'LALEH' and which were originally produced as part of the Open University Module E835 (1997) and which have since undergone substantial transformation. This debt to E835 is clearly referred to in the body of the dissertation.

R.Evans

## **Glossary of acronyms used in the text**

BWL	"Betriebswirtschaftslehre" = Business Administration
CA	conversation analysis
CAQDAS	computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software
CBA	category-bound activity
CDA	critical discourse analysis
DA	discourse analysis
HE	higher education
MCD	membership category device
NRW	North-Rhine-Westphalia
VET	vocational and educational training
VWL	"Volkswirtschaftslehre" = Economics

### **In the Extracts**

[Ab = 'abstract', Or = 'orientation', Co = 'complication', Ev = 'evaluation', Re = 'resolution', cd='coda']

Coda	coda of narrative
Conc	Conclusion
Ev	Evaluation
MP	modal particle
Or	orientation
Pro	prosodic element
SLE	serious life event
SR	self-repair

## Chapter 1: Introduction - Focus - Rationale

### ***What this dissertation attempts to show***

This dissertation is about the talk of students at a German university on the subject of their education. Their talk in interviews was taped, transcribed and the analysis of aspects of their talk is presented and discussed here. This is a qualitative study of a small cohort of students which combines ethnographic detail about the research site with close analysis of talk. The method of analysis of the talk, too, is a combination of *discourse analytical and conversation analytical approaches to interaction*. What I try to demonstrate in the following chapters of this dissertation is the coherence of students' discourse practices when talking about their experience of learning. I argue that the students at the centre of this research negotiate the intrinsic difficulties of 'institutional talk' by deploying a range of discourses. These are both the 'official' discourses of the institution as well as individual discourses of resistance and opposition. On the basis of the evidence of individual discourse practices demonstrated in the unstructured interviews analysed here, I also claim that heteroglossic elements in interview talk are a central characteristic of such talk. I call these heteroglossic elements - mainly the voices of significant others, but not exclusively - '***embedded speech***' and I understand its use as a '***plausibility device***' in the process of self-expression and the production of own discourse. Embedded speech also possesses this 'plausible-making' function in response to requests to generalize in talk about personal experience and can serve to back up students' thoughts and ideas as they express them in talk. A further significant result of this study which I demonstrate in Chapters 4-8, which contain the analysis of the interview transcripts used here, is the respondents' construction of coherent narratives of learning experience, which I understand to be interactively accomplished '***learning biographies***'. Analysis of numerous extracts taken from student interviews shows the 'learning biography' to be an important constituent

element of individual students' discursal identities. In addition, the interview transcripts permit a further claim to be made, namely, that individuals construct their learning biographies and account for their significance in talk with others as members of different social and functional categories or contexts. The way individuals would have their narratives of learning understood, I argue here, is consistently 'grounded' in **category-bound activities** and identities, e.g. with reference to age, gender, ethnic background, membership of professional, institutional, or familial groups. Self-definition by category membership serves the purpose of positioning individuals in and across different interactive contexts. The over-arching concept of interaction that ties all these elements together is that of "**learning discourse**". I want to argue that students' responses in the interactive context of research interviews are essentially coherent and structured, and the work of 'doing being a student' makes use of language resources organized as recognizable discourses of the remembered and actively formed learning experience, which I call **learning discourse(s)**.

### ***Focus of the research***

The 'matter' of the research presented here, then, is the sense of identity and perspectives, perceptions and personal value systems of students in higher education (HE) in relation to university degree course content and its perceived relation/relevance to their previous experience (e.g. school history and post-school options, pressures or encouragements from within and without family/friends' circles; work experience history, etc.) and learning prospects and choices.

Specifically, the research looks at the learning discourses of undergraduate university students following a degree in Economics/Business Administration at the University of Duisburg in North-Rhine Westphalia, Germany. Selected near-final semester students on a 5-year degree course are the object of this study.

The research is conceived as qualitative and ethnographic in method, providing detailed description of a case study. Students' talk, collected in unstructured in-depth interviews, is analysed and the discourses of learning and learning histories of a limited cohort of students are investigated.

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### ***Preliminary remarks regarding structure of the dissertation.***

Before going on to a discussion of the social and educational rationale for this study, as well as of the broad methodological considerations involved in a study of this kind, it may be useful to sketch in the lines of the whole dissertation, chapter for chapter.

In this first chapter, an attempt is made to define the scope and fit of the research questions in relation to the research 'puzzle' my questions involve. This makes it necessary to discuss briefly the particular view of educational reality under investigation here. This is followed by some preliminary remarks concerning the involvement of the concepts of identity and self in processes at work in education and society.

The university as the site of this research is then taken up and as an aid in the thick description of the research site, literature on German university students, Business studies students in particular, and conditions of study during the last two decades is briefly reviewed. Following on from this, significant studies of students' learning experiences and research into student learning biographies are reviewed and discussed.

In **Chapter 2** I discuss the literature relevant to an understanding of the central issues raised by the research questions and the methodology and research instruments adopted here. The main areas which are critically reviewed in the critical literature review are:

- learning biographies and narratives
- language and discourse practices
- academic discourses, including discourses of 'resistance'
- the contribution that conversation analytical and discourse analytical approaches to interview data can make to a study of students' learning discourses and learning biographies
- various models of the research interview

- the character of interview interaction

**Chapter 3** outlines the conduct of the research and the broad kinds of data collection and analysis carried out. Questions of access are also addressed here.

The analysis of the data is presented in **Chapters 4-8**. **Chapter 4** occupies a special place in the data analysis. Here one student respondent is presented in considerable detail and serves as an individual in-depth case study. On the basis of this detailed analysis of the interview interaction with one student ('Marie'), the construction in talk of a 'learning biography' and the employment in students' talk of 'learning discourse(s)', are illustrated. For the whole 'corpus' of students' talk, in **Chapters 5-8** the findings are discussed under the broad headings of biographies and biographization; interdiscursivity and competing discourses; hedging and modality; academic voice and identity as category-bound activities. The conclusion of the dissertation, **Chapter 9**, is reserved for a discussion of the findings and for an indication of applications of the results as well as options for their dissemination and/or further development.

## **Research questions**

The research question this investigation is designed to look into is:

*What discourses of learning and identity do students employ in relation to their individual learning biographies, their experience of learning and of knowledge-acquisition in the HE environment, and how critically reflective are students of the positioning enacted through the dominant discourses of the HE environment with particular regard to institutional discourses of academic learning and knowledge?*

Expanding on this primary question, we can pose the more detailed questions in the table below:

- What do students' discourses in talk, captured in unstructured interviews and observed in learning situations, audio-taped and transcribed and stored in electronic corpora, reveal about students' sense of self and self-development, their experience of learning and of discourse-acquisition in the HE environment?



- What effect do student (and pre-student) histories have on students' perceptions of course relevance, motivation to study, sense of purpose and experience of empowerment or alienation in relation to teaching/training and work experience?
- To what extent do the discourses of the university appear to be 'conversationalized' in students' talk?
- How critically reflective are students of the positioning enacted through the dominant discourses of these environments?
- What, if any, discourses of resistance or opposition do students oppose to dominant discourses of academic learning and knowledge?
- Does the HE-environment function for the students in the case study as a "discourse community"?
- What relationship is there between the research questions and the type of data generated by the interview?
- Is there a fit between the research questions and the data? Do I get answers to my questions? An equally important question to ask is: would there be other more efficient and valid methods for getting answers, results, data? What might the answers look like? What relationship do the data collection and data analysis methods used here have to 'truth' or 'reality'? How do my chosen methods look at a 'piece' of reality, of life 'out there'?

Right from the start, the question of what count as 'facts' (i.e. the ontological view of this research undertaking) needs to be clarified. If the interview is seen as a key to open some kind of door into the thinking of students and thereby release a flood of thoughts and opinions on topics *like school learning, university choice, exams, academic essays* and so on, then the data analysis will be occupied with sifting different statements of belief. Either the researcher steps back and merely presents the words of the interviewees. Or s/he interprets them in their own words.

Or, alternatively, the data is seen as constituted in the interview process jointly and as a process. Not the talk as facts is analysed, but the *speech as interaction*. The *construction* of dialogic talk in the interview is analysed. The interview is no longer a

realist instrument for looking at the grittiness of 'out there', but at the *narrative construction of learning biographies*. The epistemological aspect of this change of perspective means that the *interactive features of the data* are highlighted. We cannot know in any final way what people are thinking, but we can follow how interviewees are positioned and position themselves in discursal fashion in the course of the continually changing contexts of the interview.

Equally, the creation of transcripts and their use comes to the fore. For despite the renunciation of "realistic" aims, there must be no loss of potential reliability or validity. Far from it being the case that the constant accomplishment in interaction of social life means that data generated in and from such interaction cannot be reliable or that validity and generalizability is irrelevant, the clear documentation (via audio tapes and detailed transcription methods) and reporting of research procedures used make the research accessible to a wider public and satisfy the basic demands of social scientific reliability (Silverman, 2000: 187-188). The aim of this type of research becomes the generation of reliable, valid results, and generalization from a limited case study is possible (Mason, 1996; Peräkylä, 1997; Silverman, 2000).

Thus, the topic of this research is learning discourse and discourses of identity; the research question suggests that (such) discourses are involved in the make-up (are core components) of social life and that they are somehow knowable through social research; it is possible to generate knowledge about, and evidence of them. The research question can essentially be understood as a "causal puzzle" (Mason, 1996: 15) which poses questions about the influence of learning biographies on discourse practices. Evidence of such influence is sought in the practical accomplishment within the interactive setting of the research interview of narrative discourses of self and learning. This qualitative research aim is shown to draw out a number of significant features from the interactional talk in the context of the research interview. In the following chapters various aspects of the talk of student respondents will be examined. To repeat what I set out at the start of this chapter, these include:

- The employment of coherent narratives
- The construction of learning biographies
- The organisation of discourses of learning both within and in opposition to dominant discourses
- The employment of embedded speech as a plausibility device
- The employment of membership category information to ground discursal self in talk

## ***Rationale of the research and its educational relevance***

### **A context and a unit of analysis**

My concern from the outset was with the choice of research context and research tools and their suitability for the collection of language data capable both of analysis as discourse and of generating theory. In this connection, I cite Deborah Schiffrin where she stresses precisely this concern when she remarks that finding a context, and defining a unit of (linguistic) analysis are important for theory. "These fundamental choices reflect", she says, "our assumptions about communication, coherence, and the goals of a linguistic analysis and theory" (Schiffrin, 1997: 90).

In similar vein, Jennifer Mason (1996) suggests that qualitative research should fulfil certain minimum requirements. It should, she says:

- be systematic and rigorous
- be flexible and contextual
- "involve critical self-scrutiny by the researcher, or active reflexivity"
- produce "social explanations to intellectual puzzles" which, in turn, should be "based on a way of seeing the world, and on a particular form of explanatory logic"
- produce explanations which are generalizable (Mason, 1996: 5-6).

Bearing these injunctions in mind, in this first section I wish to examine the theoretical basis of my original research problem, the theoretical justification of my research questions and the fit between research questions and methodology. Of the most recent literature on this area the work of David Silverman (1993/<sup>2</sup>2001, 1997a, 1998c, 2000) and Jennifer Mason (1996) have been extremely useful and I use their arguments in favour of a systematic social scientific and qualitative research fairly heavily. Their overall approach, be it towards a theoretical grounding of the research undertaking, clarification of the status of evidence, generation of data, or the question of reliable and valid results, has influenced my research aims on all these matters.

### **The research 'puzzle'**

Silverman stresses the need for a theoretical underpinning of any research, with no excuse for qualitative research undertakings (1993: 2; 1998c: 109-110; 2000: 75-87). Models, concepts, theory are judged by their 'usefulness' in explaining social events, facts, or 'puzzles' as Mason calls them (Mason, 1996: 6). The theoretical models of ethnomethodology, interactionism or Foucauldian 'discourse' are relevant to this research and serve as the theoretical supports of the particular social explanation I am seeking to provide for students' talk about their learning experiences. The use of ethnomethodological analysis of my respondents' talk in interviews, for example, cannot be 'disproved', but can certainly be found to be more or less useful in furthering the explanations I wish to make. If I take the view that the "real world" to which my explanations will conceivably frequently refer is a "reference to the organized activities of everyday life" and that the phenomena that I will be participating in and investigating in the course of my research can be seen as "an ongoing accomplishment of the concerted activities of daily life" the accomplishment of which are "ordinary, artful" and known and used by the members of society (Garfinkel, 1967: vii), then it follows that my research methodology must pass the 'usefulness' test for the purposes of this theoretical approach to 'reality'. To be more exact, the methods arising from the research perspective I adopt must prove 'useful' in generating data around the research questions I formulate. My perspective is, taken broadly, qualitative and largely ethnographic, and in narrower focus, conversation analytical and discourse analytical. There should, then, be a theoretical and methodological fit between the overarching model of social experience I am

advancing - orderly social interaction is accomplished in artful, common-sense fashion, involving accounts which combine particulars of the social and cultural practices of individuals (hereafter frequently termed 'members') as well as their conversational or more diffusely interactional practices (Silverman, 1997: 114) - and the methods of data generation and data analysis I have opted to use.

Harold Garfinkel's development of ethnomethodological analysis provides a valuable way in to the kind of data I am concerned with here. He writes, for example, that the sociologist's study is "directed to the tasks of learning how members' actual, ordinary activities consist of methods to make practical actions, practical circumstances, common sense knowledge of social structure, and practical sociological reason analysable; and of discovering the formal properties of commonplace, practical common sense actions, 'from within' actual settings, as ongoing accomplishments of those settings" (Garfinkel, 1967: viii).

What at first sight may seem to be a disregard for 'social things' in favour of a technique for micro-analysis of banal events such as telephone calls or service encounters, turns out to be a rich field of analysis. For, as the passage from Garfinkel above makes clear, the orderly accomplishment of everyday practices takes place in settings managed and 'done' with an acknowledgement of conscious shaping and choice, with a recognition of the 'becoming', i.e. the contingency of settings as they unfold, and with a recognition of social context and 'culture' as parts of those settings. That Garfinkel also explicitly underlines the indexical (person, time, place) and reflexive character of settings, which is used to "produce, accomplish, recognize or demonstrate rational-adequacy-for-all-practical-purposes of [members'] procedures" (Garfinkel, 1967: 8) only increases the potential of interview data and encourages the deployment of a mixed range of analytical methods which accommodate 'context', interaction in context, voice, but also social and institutional practices. In short, an approach like the three-dimensional approach adopted from Norman Fairclough and which I examine in greater detail in Chapter 2, - i.e. the 'text' itself (here the interview interaction and sequential turn-taking), institutional discourses and social discourse practices (Fairclough, 1989: 25-26), - when approached with an ethnomethodological grounding, discloses a set of analysable

actions, as demonstrable as Harvey Sacks' famous "this-and-that" (Sacks, 1992 I: 27, cited in Silverman, 1998a: 53)<sup>1</sup>.

Ultimately, I am aiming for a satisfactory level of results in the particular combination of theory and methodology communicated by the more than unwieldy (and therefore mentioned for the second and last time here) name of 'ethnomethodological ethnography'. What it is or at least promises to do is easier to define than to read: this approach combines the 'micro-analysis' of conversation with the detailed study of the research setting in which interaction is embedded.

### **The epistemological perspective**

Drawing here upon the list of 'ontological components' that Mason proposes might form the aspects of social reality that a piece of research wishes to explain, I can pick out the following as being directly implicated in a broadly ethnomethodological perspective:

- interactions, situations, social relations
- social or cultural practices
- stories, narratives, biographies
- identity, self
- understandings (Mason, 1996: 11-12)

According to the basic theoretical perspective employed here, then, these research components broadly represent practices and are all facets of "doing being ordinary" (Sacks, II 1992: 215-221, cited by Silverman, 2000: 148). On the basis of this selection, the following question must be put: what represents or might represent knowledge or evidence of these components of social reality (Mason 1996: 13)?

A number of possible data sources might suggest themselves, among which institutional encounters, family or other conversations, or interviews of various

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<sup>1</sup>. Discussing the work of the Chicago school of ethnography of the 1930s he says: "So, for example, the relevance of the works of the Chicago sociologists is that they do contain a lot of information about this and that. And this-and-that is what the world is made up of" (Sacks, Lectures in Conversation I, ed. by Gail Jefferson, Oxford, Blackwell 1992.)

kinds. All of these data sources can be thought of as sources of 'naturally occurring talk'. With each of these sources there is always a strong temptation to take what is said, what is reported, or what is believed and thought by respondents/informants/participants as 'natural', untouched authentic social facts which can be duly processed as data. This is particularly true of the research interview, which is the prime data source for this research. Such an epistemological standpoint sees the interview (and all interaction) as a 'window' onto the world (Seale, 1998b: 215) or as John Heritage puts it "the verbal formulations of subjects are treated as an appropriate substitute for the observation of actual behaviour" (Heritage, 1984: 236 cited in Silverman, 2000: 97).

An alternative to such a 'realist' approach to interview data which I shall be using here, sees the research interview as "accessing various stories or narratives through which people describe their world" (Silverman, 2000: 122). This approach sees the data as evidence of the joint generation by interviewer and interviewees of "plausible accounts of the world" (2000: 123). The interview is employed less as a resource containing the objective data the realist view assumes to be 'out there', than as a 'topic', looking at the linguistic repertoires or methods which people draw upon in constructing accounts in interactive encounters (Seale, 1998b: 212-213).

### **The macro environment and vocational/educational debates:**

As the main focus of the research is on student discourses of learning and identity, on perceptions of their study choices for their future professional careers (and more generally for their wider educational development), we can see the processes at work shaping student identities and expectations - experiences from school, vocational training, work experience, personal values and the reasons behind the choice of university study over employment - as embedded in the debates around social and economic 'relevance' of education, whether in schools or universities. Against the background of calls for the acquisition of "useful knowledge", investigation into students' discourses of learning and knowledge in the late 1990s and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century would seem to have a clear educational rationale.

The debates in the UK since James Callaghan's celebrated Ruskin speech in 1976 have necessarily dwelt on schools and vocational and educational training (VET)

provision for the 16-18 year-olds and discussions around "human capital" versus "humanistic" education (White, 1988; Woodhall, 1987; Wirth, 1991). In Germany, in contrast to the almost unconditional admiration in British literature of the 1980s for German VET arrangements (Finegold and Soskice, 1988), serious concern for the state of tertiary and higher education and the place in them of VET is apparent (Evans, 2000).

The transferral by significant numbers of young people of their work aspirations from traditional VET paths to the universities and polytechnics (Fachhochschulen) is accompanied by increasing career difficulties. The tried and trusted 'dual system' with its solid grounding in recognised qualifications and clear training and career 'trajectories' has given way to a more complex situation in which young people, far from being provided with clear routes through the training and job systems, are faced, in the judgement of some observers, by the new necessity of learning to 'navigate' their way towards their life goals (Evans, 2000: 34-36). In this context demands for educational adaptation to the needs of industry have begun to make themselves heard in Germany, too. Against a background of academic unemployment, during the nineteen-nineties voices were raised lamenting the inflexibility and one-sidedly '*academic*' character of German university education and consequent "difficulties in the transition to the employment system" (Rothe, 1994: 278), and university students of economics have been singled out for particular criticism of their *unsuitability* for decision-making in business environments as a direct result of the academic skills acquired on their degree courses (Renkl et al., 1994: 200).

Ideological constraints on the shape and content of education, and pressures to bow to 'enterprise values' have been central issues in educational research at least since the 70s in the UK, and have a much longer pedigree in the debates around 'human capital' versus 'humanistic' education (see White, 1988; Woodhall, 1987; Wirth, 1991; Chomsky, 1975). The ideological nature of education, whether in relation to dominant macro-developments or 'sea-changes' in education (Brosio 1988), education's role in producing 'compliant' workers (Cathcart and Esland, 1985) or its role in the reproduction of gender roles and 'malestream' knowledge (Weiner, 1994; Purvis, 1984; Dean, 1991; Deem, 1981) is central to my research questions here. For



the German HE context, the critique of German VET regimes today and their weaknesses (Evans, 2000; Greinert, 1994; Eckert et al., 1992; see, on the other hand, for a typical UK approach Goldsmith, 1984) and discussion of the difficulties for students in making the transition from studies to work, laid partly at the door of 'impractical' learning methods in HE (Rothe, 1994; Renkl et al., 1994), though not originating in anything like a 'Ruskin speech' - for which no parallel exists in the literature for Germany, - have been spurred by the similarly galvanising ideological effect on schooling and the HE context which came as a result of German unification in 1990 (see the collection of articles on aspects of this topic in Bynner and Silbereisen, 2000).

### **The involvement of 'self' and 'identity' in current processes**

Concepts of identity and discourses of self are involved in this process of 'technologization' of language and experience which writers like Norman Fairclough have identified (see especially Fairclough, 1996a). Roy Evans and Mary Hall (1995: 225) believe that capitalist economic structures "create a fluid construct of self". A process of rationalization of society, analogous to those processes Fairclough explores, is held responsible for the reification of experience and knowledge in the form of data (Evans and Hall, 1995: 226). Evans and Hall see the following tendencies at work: "There are two principles ...: the emphasis on positive achievement accompanied by a pedagogy that is required to be both facilitative and exacting of outcomes; and the vocational imperative that is being emphasised by central government" (1995: 226). The dominant discourses of self are responsible, they argue further, for the construction of a "'docile body' programmed to respond to the environment" (1995: 230). According to Evans and Hall, education has the role of liberating the individual from the 'false consciousness' of such a constructed self.

### ***The University***

The research context is favourable for an investigation of the discourses of learning and knowledge-acquisition of HE students. Firstly, a growing number of business studies students have already completed a full vocational or professional training period and have worked full-time in some form of business environment. Secondly, the "Gesamthochschule" (something like a 'Comprehensive University') in which the

interviews have been carried out, has by virtue of its qualification structure (mixture of polytechnic and university degrees; one-tier and two-tier diplomas) a socially mixed student population. Finally, being in the heart of the largest industrial-economic region in Europe, business studies students at Duisburg have a multiplicity of employment contacts and possibilities of the most demanding nature awaiting their qualification. The profession-oriented nature of business diploma courses increases from year to year as (slow) moves towards university reform, conceived as a need for faster-track degrees more 'in tune' with the increased pace of change in German concerns, take on more and more the characteristics of 'technologization' of institutions, their practices and their public discourses (Fairclough 1996).

### **Underlining the relevance to educational debates**

Roz Ivanič's study of adult learners' acquisition of an academic writer-identity is sufficiently similar in aim and method to my own research aim as to make it worthwhile to recall her research rationale. Arising as a practical issue in her work as an adult literacy tutor, she points out her interest in the "crucial moments in discourse" represented by the difficulty in acquiring a new way of speaking and writing occasioned when "adult commitments and experiences - other social worlds - are juxtaposed with the academic world" (Ivanič, 1997: 5-6). Her research interest, in a similar way to my own, therefore focuses on "the way in which writing academic assignments causes people to 'change their speech', to take on particular identities, and how they feel about it" (Ivanič, 1997: 7).

### **Learning Biographies: research directions**

The extremely valuable collection of contributions to a series of four symposia held at the University of Hamburg between 1985 and 1991 edited by Winfried Marotzki and Rainer Kokemohr (Kokemohr and Marotzki, 1989, Marotzki and Kokemohr, 1990) under the title "Biographies in complex institutions. Student biographies" (*Biographien in komplexen Institutionen. Studentenbiographien*) and concluded in the final volume published in 1994 by Hans-Christoph Koller and Rainer Kokemohr "Life Stories as Text" (*Lebensgeschichte als Text*, Koller and Kokemohr, 1994) also follows a research focus close to my own concerns. Kokemohr and Marotzki, in their introduction to the first volume of the symposium contributions, state:

"Study situations must be understood as learning scenarios in which there are basically two central moments: familiarization with the existing problems, knowledge and methods of an academic discipline demands in the normal course of events that the student transforms their previous orientation systems" (Kokemohr and Marotzki, 1989: 7)<sup>2</sup>.

Given that this process of re-orientation can only take place in a communicative context, through the medium of language, they go on to formulate the following axiomatic view: "This means that study processes must be understood as biographical learning processes"<sup>3</sup> and they echo the concerns of the research questions of this research when they, too, direct their attention to the 'crucial moments of discourse' involved in acquisition of student/academic identities:

"When one takes into account the fact that transformations of the level of learning and knowledge also affect the structures of the personality and its social range of practices, studying can be seen as a transformation of the self and of the subjective construction of the world" (Kokemohr and Marotzki, 1989: 7)<sup>4</sup>.

### **Learning Biographies, trajectories and 'crises'**

Learning biographies are applications of educational research in the field of biographical narratives. Regarding the scope and practice of educational biographies, Kokemohr and Marotzki point out that:

"The transformation of biographical categories takes place less through argument than through pre-predicative processes. The analysis is therefore not limited to the content of biographical learning processes. The analysis must approach the narrative text as

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<sup>2</sup> ["Studiensituationen [sind] als Lernszenarios zu begreifen, in denen grundsätzlich zwei Momente zusammenwirken: Die Einarbeitung in Problem-, Wissens- und Methodenbestände einer Disziplin fordert von Studierenden regelmäßig eine Transformation ihrer hergebrachten Orientierungssysteme."]

<sup>3</sup> ["Dies bedeutet, daß Studienprozesse als biographische Bildungsprozesse zu verstehen sind"]

<sup>4</sup> [Bedenkt man, daß Transformationen des Lernniveaus ebenso die Strukturen der Persönlichkeit wie ihres sozialen Handlungsrahmens betreffen, dann kann das Studium auch als Prozeß der Transformation des Selbst und der subjektiven Weltkonstruktion gelten.]

a complex realization of linguistic practice in which the narrator recapitulates excerpts out of their relationships to themselves and to the world" (Kokemohr and Marotzki, 1989: 9)<sup>5</sup>.

Students' voices and students' learning trajectories have been the object of considerable attention in recent years. The symposia referred to above, for example, represent an extensive exercise in analysis of student biographies collected in lengthy 'narrative' interviews following the broad methods laid down by Fritz Schütze, whose approach will be discussed separately below (see Chapter 2). Contributors to the first two volumes from the symposia confront learning biographies of students from different scientific and arts subjects as transformation processes in which the students (and the institution 'university') are involved in the more or less successful 'construction of professional problem-processing skills'/'*Ausbildung professioneller Problembearbeitungsfähigkeiten*' (Kokemohr and Marotzki, 1989: 8). The transformation process analysed is seen as played out in a phase of students' lives which the researchers comprehend as a "cognitive and psycho-social Moratorium"<sup>6</sup> and which they see as the frequently painful, and in any case 'risk-full' "core of university learning crises"<sup>7</sup> (Kokemohr and Marotzki, 1989: 8).

In the final volume of contributions to the fourth symposium (Koller and Kokemohr, 1994) the six studies are focused on one in-depth narrative interview of a university 'drop-out'. As such, the attention of the authors here is directed not so much at the professionalizing processes of the modern mass university as at the "failure to cope with the conditions of the (mass-) university institution"<sup>8</sup> (Koller and Kokemohr, 1994: 9). While the biography analysed in this volume cannot strictly speaking be considered a 'learning' biography (and this opinion is shared by the editors), the attention addressed to the difficulties and 'crises' experienced in the mass university of the 80s and 90s in the Bundesrepublik is of interest for the similar phenomena of studying encountered in the students' talk elicited for this research.

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<sup>5</sup> ["Biographische Kategorienwandel bereiten sich weniger explizit argumentativ als vielmehr vorprädikativ vor. Die Analyse ist deshalb nicht auf die Inhalte biographischen Lernens eingeschränkt. Sie hat den Erzähltext als ein komplexes Gebilde sprachlichen Handelns wahrzunehmen, in dem die Erzähler Ausschnitte ihres Selbst- und Weltverhältnisses rekapitulieren".]

<sup>6</sup> ["... ein kognitives und psycho-soziales Moratorium..." (Kokemohr and Marotzki 1989: 8)]

<sup>7</sup> ["... Kern universitärer Studienkrisen" (Kokemohr and Marotzki 1989: 8)]

<sup>8</sup> ["... Scheitern an den Bedingungen der Institution (Massen-) Universität ..." (Koller and Kokemohr 1994: 9)]

Students' life and study 'crises' – understood as crucial moments in life histories or crucial life events – received attention too in the form of survey-based investigation into the psychosocial condition of the silent majority of students at a representative West German (pre-Unification) university. In the 1986 study of students from seven different faculties – including that of Economics and Business Administration – at the University of Gießen (Krüger et al, 1986), survey questionnaire data were combined with interview data for students of Medicine and Economics/Business Studies to examine student perceptions of their learning conditions and problems. Areas treated in this government-sponsored study include family background, motivation, experiences with teaching staff, examinations, personal status and development, career chances, and school experiences. The researchers employ a multi-step approach to the interview texts, progressing from the 'manifest' (i.e. the 'factual' information given by the student respondents) to the 'latent' ("through breaks in the manifest text, through slips of the tongue, through contradictions and other indirect information"<sup>9</sup>) to the 'psychosocial problem profile' of the students (Krüger et al, 1986: 256-258, 265-269). Notwithstanding the interest of some of the research's generalizations about student perceptions, the qualitative data of the interview transcripts are referred to only in summarized form, and the students' talk is summed up in the researchers' words. The emphasis of the research remains quantitative, and the interview interaction is left un-discussed.

In another interesting study carried out in the middle of the 1980s, student attitudes and behaviour were investigated at the University of München (Munich) and the Technical University of the same city (Schindler, 1994). The study mixes qualitative interviewing with the use of a short questionnaire survey. Twenty-three semi-structured interviews were carried out. The main research question asked concerns the motives for students' attitudes to, and perceptions of, studying and university life (1994: 5). Important topics which are echoed, too, in my data, such as the deterioration of teaching and studying conditions at universities as a result of (a) reductions in teaching staff, (b) a shift of priorities from teaching to research, (c) inconclusive reform discussions, (d) an ageing student population, (e) reduced

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<sup>9</sup> ["Durch Brüche im manifesten Text, durch Versprecher, durch Widersprüchlichkeiten und andere indirekte Mitteilungen" (Krüger et al, 1986: 258)]

student mobility and (f) discrepancies between student expectations and university realities, are spoken about in the interviews and broached in the questionnaires (1994: 7-17). The qualitative data collected via the individual interviews is presented here too only in summarized form. The talk of the students is reported mainly in indirect speech, and occasional phrases are presented in wholly de-contextualized form. The presentation model is literary and student and researcher reflexivity is entirely ignored.

Life-course researchers have turned their attention to institutional lives and have noted the constructedness and meaningfulness of life stories developed at the "intersections of families, educational and social institutions and labor markets" (Heinz, 1992: 9). This approach, which rightly warns against over-emphasizing the power of institutions such as the university to create and control the passages of individuals from one life phase to another (e.g. school to university, university to work) and instead stresses the fact that biographies are "negotiated and emerge from exchanges between institutions, their gatekeepers and the biographical actor" (Heinz, 1992: 10), furthers an understanding of the role of agency in the individual's construction of their learning biography. As Walter Heinz points out, "it is not only a matter of correct historical time and space accounts but also of using the appropriate institutional codes for assembling a meaningfully integrated life course" and that "It is the individual who has to connect multiple institutional realities that he or she has to pass in constructing a biography" (Heinz, 1992: 10).

A recent study of student experience and of the coping strategies of students from academic and non-academic backgrounds has pointed out usefully the importance of gender and social extraction in the adaptation process to the institutional and learning norms/discourses of the university environment (Haas, 1999). A central aspect of Erika Haas' study is her conclusion that the expansion of higher education which was begun in the 60s and 70s and was intended to remove social inequality, has been a failure and that, as a result, students are required to cope with the learning experience within a system dominated discursively by a tradition of inequality (Haas, 1999: 228).

A study commissioned by the German Federal Education Ministry into the situation of Turkish students in the Bundesrepublik (Sen et al, 1994) is valuable for the light it throws on the different problems faced by this large student group. The study, which was conducted by survey interview and a small number of individual semi-structured interviews (20), looked into the situation of Turkish students at seven Universities and five *Fachhochschulen* (Polytechnics) spread around the 'old Bundesländer', i.e. in former West Germany. The results of the study, which looks at family structures, subject-choice, study conditions, satisfaction with courses, social contacts, and future prospects, suggest that Turkish students' access to studies are severely conditioned by the educational level of their parents (Sen et al, 1994: 150-152), and that dissatisfaction with studying and student life is exacerbated by cultural difficulties in relation to the German university environment and the non-Turkish student body (Sen et al, 1994: 160-161). Further, the study discusses the internal differences within the large Turkish student population, between '*Bildungsinländer*' ('inland-Turks' attending German educational institutions– i.e. Turks born in the BRD) and '*Bildungsausländer*' (Turkish students who have come to study in Germany instead of in Turkey) particularly in connection with unequal career chances in Germany, or rather, as they see their chances of finding an employment after their studies in the BRD (Sen et al, 1994: 162-165). These perceptions are present, too, in the talk of two of the student respondents analysed in detail here, and are echoed in further audio-taped interviews that form the wider ethnographic base of this research and which highlight the informal discourses students develop.

Geoffrey Elliot, in his study of post-compulsory education in the UK (Elliot, 1999) which focuses on predominantly mature students entering HE and coping with the requirements of studying, stresses the need to break out of institutional-oriented analyses and descriptions of the learning process (Elliot, 1999: 7-8). One perspective that is necessary to highlight is the perspective of the learners. A natural consequence of attending to students' perspectives and students' agency in learning processes is to see these processes as involving many different spaces and moments of learning and significant elements of student self-direction, but also of student resistance to teacher-mediated institutional discourses (Elliot, 1999: 12).

Elliot's concern to challenge a teacher-centred discourse of HE practice and theory is taken up in a setting closer to this research in an interesting recent study of student/staff contact discussions at a German university (Boettcher and Meer, 2000). The topic of 'distance' between students and professors and the lack of contact and discussion, advice and help given, is repeated over and over again throughout my corpus of interview transcripts, as indeed it is in all the studies so far referred to here.

Köster (1995) and Köster and Matzat (1997) present quantitative data from the university investigated in this study concerning the relevance of students' subject choice on the duration of degree courses and the likelihood of their dropping out or breaking off studying. In these two short studies produced for the Department of Sociology at Duisburg University, survey response data is subjected to quantitative evaluation. Subject choice, the specific characteristics of learning tasks in the subject chosen, examinations and nearness/contact to teaching staff are topics which my own student respondents raise consistently in their talk as will be seen in Chapters 4-8 below.

### ***The question of the 'obviousness' of the RQ(s)***

While it may certainly be the case that 'the fact' of such transformation to the self and to the subjective construction of the world as a result of the studying experience in the university is fairly obvious, the 'how' of this investigation's proposed approach seems sufficiently grounded in the far from obvious complexities of student discourse in interaction in order to serve as a further pillar of the research rationale. For as we have seen above, the analysis of students' biographical narratives is not a mere recounting of the "content of biographical learning processes" but should "approach the narrative text as a complex realisation of linguistic practice" in which the narrator sifts and works through in talk "excerpts out of their relationships to themselves and to the world" (Kokemohr and Marotzki, 1989: 9)<sup>10</sup>. Beyond that, Gage's comments on the obviousness of research aims and results are taken as useful encouragement here (Gage, 1991).

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<sup>10</sup> For the original see note 5 above.



Everywhere (and I personally have had discussions around the Bundesrepublik in Emden, Lüneburg, Ulm, Mannheim, Duisburg, Heilbronn, Berlin and as far afield as Köthen und Breitenbrunn in former East Germany, Linz and Villach in Austria) new courses are being introduced. New technologies are making progress. Combined studies and sandwich courses, work-placements and contract studies, increasing demands for foreign experience and the increasing value placed on multilingual skills are changing conditions of study and impinging on students' learning experiences.

### ***Some Applications***

Qualitative research which looks at the studying experiences and investigates the perceptions of a small cohort of university students with regard to many of the topics already raised and studied in the research mentioned above can still hope to obtain interesting, and fresh, insights into the situation of students today. The topics - perennial topics in many cases - such as learning methods and examination strategies, student self-help and informal study-groups, can be investigated in many ways, no doubt. This dissertation sets out to try to gain reliable data from the talk in interviews of selected students. There is no ambition here to collect extremely generalizable data. The small sample of students investigated here is not particularly representative of the student body. Neither, however, are they exceptions. Their inclusion in the corpus of interview data - made up of both the transcribed interviews and that part as yet untranscribed - is consciously selective, and they were chosen on the grounds that they characterize the whole (students currently studying at German universities in North-RhineWestphalia, for example) in many ways. This approach may be understood as "qualitative selection" (Bauer and Aarts, 2000: 20), particularly as the aim is the construction of a language corpus, or "texts, utterances, or other specimens considered more or less representative of a language and usually stored as an electronic database" (McArthur, 1992, cited in Bauer and Aarts, 2000: 23). Of course, the 'language' collected in this research is the interactive talk (*parole*) of the seven-plus HE students of this investigation.

Two of the seven studied in detail here are of Turkish origin, and students of Turkish origin make up the largest single non-German ethnic group in German higher education - 34% of foreign students in 1998/99 (Hahlen, 2000: 25). The weight of

ethnic Turkish students among my respondents reflects, too, the fact that the region in which this investigation was carried out – North-Rhine Westphalia – has the largest concentration of Turkish students in the Bundesrepublik (Bundesministerium, 1994: 43). Likewise, the age structure of my respondents largely reflects the national average – 28,9 years in 98/99 (Hahlen, 2000: 25). Five out of the seven analysed here did an apprenticeship before starting their studies – a common characteristic of the 1990s (Schindler, 1994: 16). Yet five, too, of the seven are female, while in 1997/98 women made up just under a third of all Economics/Business Administration students (32% - GMU: 74).

Attention to the detail of these students' talk in depth interviews can, I feel convinced, provide significant insights into learning methods and strategies. Informal discourses of necessity and self-sufficiency under the 'mass' conditions of studying in a faculty like Economics/Business Administration with a Winter-Semester intake of 725 'freshers' (figures for Winter-Semester 97/98 – GMU: 21) and a total of Business Administration/Economics students studying for the Diploma of over three-and-a-half thousand individuals (3089 in Winter-Semester 1997/98 – GMU: 65) which attend to the questions of time and study length and how they are seen from the point of view of the students can be elicited in interactive conversation-like interview situations. Similarly, questions such as:

- the relative position of theory in a theory burdened degree course and the pragmatic strategies of students to deal with what they may see as knowledge of varying relevance to their futures
- contact to teachers, teachers' advice and acquisition through contact to teaching staff of (a) learning skills and (b) academic discourses (Boettcher and Meer 2000).
- the role of gender factors in university and general learning experience
- the role that ethnic background plays in study choices and learning trajectories

can be investigated using a small case study such as this.

To sum up, then, this investigation seeks to demonstrate the following:

- That students produce learning biographies in the interaction of the research interview which are discontinuous yet coherent (Chapters 4 and 5)
- That a central characteristic of the biographization of students' learning experiences is the employment of the speech of significant others in the form of embedded speech (Chapters 4 and 6)
- That students develop learning discourses in concordance with and in opposition to authoritative institutional discourses (Chapters 4, 7 and 8)
- That a central vehicle of such discursal identity claims is the use of membership category description (Chapters 4 and 8)

In the next chapter, literature relevant to the theory and methods which inform this research is critically reviewed and the central concepts of discourse, learning biographies, and the discursal significance of 'context' in interaction are discussed and defined in connection with the work of the research interview.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

After defining the use made here of the concepts self, discourse and academic discourse, the literature review concentrates on a number of areas central to the research question of this dissertation. Firstly, work on coherence and process in the 'biographization' of individual learning experience is discussed, followed by a brief examination of literature regarding collaborative and dialogic aspects of learning and knowledge acquisition and the role of language in the creation of discourse. The particular value - as well as weaknesses - of a critical discourse analytical approach to linguistic and social elements of discourse is discussed primarily in connection with the work of Fairclough. Institutional discourses and the counter-current 'sub rosa' discourses of individuals in their discursively constructed identities and histories are then examined. An extensive discussion of the concept of 'context' in relation to the local and institutional production of discourses and the collection of language data in the qualitative interview completes the literature review.

### ***Self, discourse, academic discourses: definitions***

The terms 'self', 'identity', 'discourse' and 'academic discourse/institutional discourse' will be used frequently throughout this study. The first two terms are used throughout in their 'dictionary' sense, the main emphasis of their meaning residing in students' 'common sense' perceptions of their significance for themselves in the narration of self-centred autobiographic histories or 'learning biographies' as they shall be called here. For a closer discussion of the critical readings of these two concepts - for which there is no place here - Ivanič's introductory treatment of the question of identity, which forms the basis of these remarks, is extremely useful (Ivanič, 1997: 10-30). In the course of the literature review below, which relates the literature to methodological issues, varying views of self and identity will be drawn upon and discussed (e.g. Edley and Wetherell, 1997; Evans & Hall, 1995; Fairclough, e.g. 1992a; Ivanič, 1997; Kress, 1996; Linde, 1993; Mills, 1997;

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Schiffrin, 1996; Weedon, 1987). The terms 'discourse' and 'academic discourse/institutional discourse' likewise are used in the widest sense, embracing at the same time more strictly linguistic interpretations (e.g. Stubbs, 1983, 1996; Tannen, 1993a and 1993b; Schiffrin, 1994 for discourse analysis; Duszak, 1997; Gunnarsson, 1997 for academic discourse communities; Heritage, 1997 for institutional discourse) as well as 'social' and poststructuralist approaches (Fairclough, 1989-1997 and Ivanič, 1997; Mills, 1997; Cameron, 1995; Coates, 1997; Corson, 1995).

In the broadest linguistic sense, following Fairclough I understand discourse to be "extended samples of either spoken or written language" (Fairclough, 1992: 3). The emphasis is on the interactive origins of such language and on the "processes of producing and interpreting speech and writing, as well as the situational context of language use" (1992: 3). Therefore the term 'discourse' in this broad sense is "language-in-its-social-context" (Ivanič, 1997: 37). In this sense I use it to denote the discourse of 'conversational' interaction. The discursive practices of the institution or 'academic community'; and the social *discourses* (in the plural) or *orders of discourse* employed and drawn upon by researcher and respondents in the construction and constitution of their respective identities and social practice are, clearly, on a different level of abstraction to the broader notion of discourse/language use. On this conceptual level, 'discourse', 'discourses' and specific 'discourses' (e.g. 'learning discourse[s]') refer to "ways of structuring areas of knowledge and social practice" (Fairclough 1992a: 3) through language/texts and are understood to be socially and institutionally coherent 'sets' (or 'orders', in fact) of ideas and 'ways of talking' (but also much more than this<sup>11</sup>) which individuals and groups adopt, respond to, recognize, reject and oppose. I also discuss differences between branches of research in Discourse Analysis (henceforth DA) which have a bearing on the type of data analysis proposed here, including Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). However, for the sake of convenience (and because references to CDA are limited to the discussion

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<sup>11</sup> It is clear that by 'orders of discourse' not merely spoken language, conversation or verbal communication is referred to. Physical presence, behaviour, signs and symbols, gesture, arrangement of objects, etc., can all be drawn upon to make meaning of social entities and relations between things and people.

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of research by representatives of 'critical' discourse analysis) I refer to all forms of discourse analysis throughout simply as DA.

DA (and CDA) practices are contrasted frequently here with Conversation Analysis (henceforth CA). CA is the method developed by Harvey Sacks in the 60s and 70s of close analysis of limited pieces of audio-taped speech (initially suicide calls). Out of his desire to establish clarity about how people go about organizing their talk, Sacks (and later Jefferson and Schegloff) developed a method of close analysis based on detailed transcripts (for a succinct introduction to CA see, for example, Silverman, 1997b, Chapter 2, pp. 26-32). I discuss CA theory and practice at various points of this chapter (see, for instance, the section "A hierarchy of contexts", and the last three sections of the discussion of the research interview, beginning at "The local organization of the research interaction" below).

### ***Learning biographies, life stories and reflective oral autobiographies - biographization***

I turn my attention here first of all to an area of social research less well represented in much English-language DA and CA work which is central to the research questions posed in this dissertation. Twentieth-century German social research has employed the (re-)told history of respondents in every area of educational research (Schulze, 1991, 1996; Marotzki, 1991, 1996; Krüger, 1996). Theodor Schulze points out the etymology of the word "biography" from 'bios' - life, way of life, lifetime - and 'graphein' - write, inscribe (Schulze, 1991: 136-7). The received meaning today encompasses both the description of an individual life - a type of text - and that life itself as a set of actions (Schulze, 1991: 136). Similarly ambiguous are the terms 'life history' and 'life story'. The former owes much to historical science and sees the life history as part of an over-arching process; the latter, on the other hand, similarly to 'biography', is related to a particular text genre, and is seen as consisting of relatively fixed elements, i.e. connected events, a clear aim and climax (Schulze, 1991: 143-6). 'Oral history', too, may be considered as being ultimately connected to some general history of humanity or social processes, despite its immediacy and closeness to individual lives and problems (1991: 146). For Schulze, and this is the view shared in this research, the object of interest in educational life/biographical research is "the

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particularity of the individual's life and the relation of the individual to [herself]" (Schulze, 1991: 146<sup>12</sup>). For this aim, Schulze adopts the term 'autobiographical reflexion'. This is defined as a form of self reflexion:

"relating to a biography in the double sense of the word: in relation to that which produces something like biographical texts but which unites the individual life which is expressed in those texts, holds it together and leads it in a particular direction - autobiographically" (Schulze, 1991: 149-50)<sup>13</sup>.

Winfried Marotzki, similarly, finds biographical research (*Biographieforschung*) a particularly useful research instrument: it brings empirical analysis to the phenomena learning and education and then both of these are analysed within the context of the life-history, connecting up in this fashion with the concept of the constitution of the subject (Marotzki, 1991: 182). The 'narrative' interview is used in this context as an interactive instrument for the collection of self-related data. Marotzki defines the employment and the advantages of the narrative interview and the data it generates thus:

"The real advantage of narrative interviews in the generation of data is that data are produced from which ... it is possible to see how the informant has processed events he (sic) - in whatever form - was involved in. Biographization is the name of the process through and in which the informant brings some kind of order in the interview situation to what is told, according to place, time, connections in the sequence of events, motives, conditions, causes and effects, etc." (Marotzki, 1991: 184)<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> [" ... die Besonderheit des individuellen menschlichen Lebens und den Bezug des Einzelnen auf sich selbst ..." (Schulze, 1991: 146)]

<sup>13</sup> [" ... bezogen auf den Kontext einer Biographie und zwar in der doppelten Bedeutung dieses Wortes: als das, was so etwas wie biographische Texte hervorbringt, aber auch als das, was das individuelle Leben, das in jenen Texten zur Sprache kommt, eigentlich erst als ein Ganzes herstellt, zusammenhält und in eine bestimmte Richtung lenkt – insofern 'autobiographisch'" (Schulze, 1991: 149-150)]

<sup>14</sup> ["Die eigentliche Leistung von narrativen Interviews als Materialerhebungsinstrument liegt darin, daß Material erhoben wird, aus dem ... erschlossen werden kann, wie der Informant Ereignisse, in die er – wie auch immer – verwickelt war, verarbeitet hat. Biographisierung bezeichnet dann jenen

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Further, the essential complexity of the individual subject, which is referred back to Wilhelm Dilthey's dictum of the 'inexhaustibility' of the individual, and the agency of the subject in reflecting upon her/his lived history is summed up in the further definition of biographization as '*sinnhafte Verarbeitung*' - i.e. processing experience and events proactively to give them a certain connected sense. The medium of the narrative interview is accorded a special connecting function, so that if the telling represents a retelling in dialectical relation to the structured interview narration, then, as Marotzki remarks: "A related experience is accordingly a related and *meaningful* experience" (Marotzki, 1991: 189-192)<sup>15</sup>. The significance of the narrative interview as well as other interview types for research of this kind will be looked into in greater detail below.

### **Creation of discoursal self in interaction**

Employing the analytical devices of pragmatics and conversation analysis (CA) instead of the objective hermeneutic methods of the German social researchers, Schiffrin (1996) arrives at a similar position to Marotzki: 'self' is created and recreated in the interaction of talk. The life stories in which self and identity are produced in a 'story-world' are "a pervasive form of text through which we construct, interpret, and share experience" (Schiffrin, 1996: 167). Picking up on Labov's work (1972 cited Schiffrin, 1996: 168), Schiffrin points out a basic set of structures: the '*abstract*', '*orientation*', '*temporal order of events*', '*complicating action*', and '*evaluation*' which make up the life story and give it structure and meaning (Schiffrin, 1996: 168). An important process underlying the sorts of texts she is interested in here links up with the central role of re-telling in Marotzki's view of 'biographization', namely "verbalization". Schiffrin claims that verbalization represents:

"the way we symbolize, transform, and displace a stretch of experience from our past ... into linguistically represented episodes, events, processes, and states." (Schiffrin, 1996: 168).

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Prozeß, innerhalb dessen der Informant in der Interviewsituation eine Ordnung in das zu Erzählende hinsichtlich von Raum, Zeit, Verknüpfung der Aufeinanderfolge von Ereignissen, Motivlagen, Bedingungen, Ursachen und Folgen etc. bringt, ..." (Marotzki, 1991: 184)]

<sup>15</sup> ["Ein mitgeteiltes Erlebnis ist also ein mitgeteiltes *verarbeitetes* Erlebnis" (Marotzki, 1991: 192)]



## **Life stories**

This process of verbalization of stretches of experience into a linguistic representation recognisable as an oral history or oral autobiography, is a process of creation of coherence in an individual's life story, according to Charlotte Linde (1993). "In order to exist in the social world" she maintains, " ... an individual needs to have a coherent, acceptable, and constantly revised life story" (1993: 3). Such a life story is created "by interweaving many linguistic and social levels" and serves to express our sense of self and as a means of communicating our sense of self to others and negotiating 'group membership' (1993: 219). Grounded as it is in "large scale systems of social understandings" (1993: 219), Linde stresses nevertheless the element of process and change inherent in the oral life history: "As a linguistic unit, the life story is a rather odd unit: it is temporally discontinuous; and at any given telling of one of its component parts, it is incomplete" (1993: 25).

## **Memory and discursive identity**

Linde emphasises the importance of 'experience' and 'common sense' in the establishment of a foundation of coherence in the individual's life story. Pervasive and invisible, common sense represents "the set of beliefs and relations between beliefs that speakers may assume are known and shared" by others (Linde, 1993: 222). Chris Weedon, too, sees the power of experience in creating the individual as a "social agent" in the assumption that "experience gives access to truth" (Weedon, 1987: 80). Yet an important condition of each individual life story is the access to discourses available at any particular moment, which, in turn, determine how experience and common sense are interpreted. For the individual, according to Weedon, is "not merely the passive site of discursive struggle" (1987: 106). The individual creates and recreates herself and her life story in linguistic interaction in which differences acquire meaning (1987: 76). Weedon makes the important point that language does not passively reflect experience and events in a life history, even though competing discourses give meaning to events retrospectively, for the meaning given to any set of events is "a version of meaning" (1987: 78). It is in this polysemic context that Weedon stresses discursive agency within the biographization process:

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"The individual who has a memory and an already discursively constituted sense of identity may resist particular interpellations or produce new versions of meaning from the conflicts and contradictions between existing discourses" (Weedon, 1987:106).

### **Narrative biographies - structures of expectation and embedded speech**

In her work on 'frames' and 'framing devices', Deborah Tannen (Tannen, 1993a, 1993c), drawing heavily on concepts developed by Erving Goffman (1959, 1990 and 1981) contributes a further insight into the structure of autobiographical talk when she talks of "structures of expectation" and their role in "verbalization in the telling of oral narratives" (Tannen, 1993c: 15). These structures of expectation - tacitly understood meanings in spoken interaction about *what* is meant, not *with* what is said - establish a common-sense basis of understanding characterised - to use Goffman's definition - by "'normatively residual' ambiguity" (Goffman, 1981: 11). Tannen here, in stressing the play of commonly held cultural "schemas of knowledge" (Tannen, 1993c) with individual interaction is echoed by Schiffrin's interest in the ability of narrative to verbalize and situate experience and thereby provide a "resource for the display of self and identity" (Schiffrin, 1996: 168).

Ambiguity, however, and incompleteness characterise the autobiographical narrative. The individual is seen to have access to a range of discourses and constitutes her narrative self through the medium of language and interaction (Weedon, 1987: 76-78). Linde points out how other peoples' stories (related in reported speech, embedded and 'layered' in the telling) become 'own' stories through a process of appropriation or conversion (Linde, 1993: 35). The discontinuous and unfinished state of the oral narrative is embodied therefore in the discourse employed by the autobiographical narrator. Here Goffman's concept of '**embedding**' will be used to describe this aspect of the speaker's 'self'. The words we speak, he points out, "are often not our own, at least our current 'own'" for "although who speaks is situationally circumscribed, in whose name words are spoken is certainly not" (Goffman, 1981: 3). Thus embedding makes it possible to 'enact' numerous voices over space and time within the interactive frame of the oral narrative and narrative interview (Goffman 1981: 4). This, as I shall show in the chapters of data analysis

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further on, is a central feature of interactive talk in the research interview. Indeed, for the development of 'own' discourses within an emergent learning biography, the 'converted' and 'enacted' words of others or a non-current 'self' - what I call here 'embedded speech' - are an important device for contextualization of talk and serve as a 'plausibility device' to ground its discursual validity.

### ***Discourses of learning and knowledge***

Learning biographies of students can show to what extent students' knowledge is given expression as "procedural display" of learning only, "procedural rather than principled [learning] – saying and doing what seems to be required ..." (Bloome, 1992: 106; Edwards and Mercer, 1987: 189). Stubbs points out here the "balance in the discourse of the conversation-interview between the 'rehearsed' (i.e. non-spontaneous) discourse and its 'utterance-by-utterance' local management" in order to take account of and conform to the demands of social interaction. This discourse, constituting "shared knowledge", is taken for granted (Stubbs, 1983: 30,34). Viewed in its constitutive linguistic elements – lexical and grammatical choices, semantic habits – this acquired and 'taken-for-granted knowledge' appears as "massive repetition and consistency in discourse" (Stubbs, 1996a: 92). I shall examine this aspect of discourse in considerably greater detail below.

### **Collaborative and dialogic learning processes, meaning and knowledge**

Knowledge acquisition, then, mediated through language in social interaction, is framed in constitutive systems of discourse, shared language uses, both consciously and routinely (i.e. unconsciously) used (Stubbs, 1996a: 6). Here language use - spoken or written 'texts' (any text) - is the central mode of approach. Language use is always simultaneously constitutive of social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and belief, or, viewed as a "discursive 'event' (i.e. any instance of discourse) is seen as being simultaneously a piece of text, an instance of discursive practice, and an instance of social practice" (Fairclough, 1992a: 4). Much the same point is made by Stubbs, when he establishes the role of language as text as a determinant of social reality: "Texts, spoken or written, comprise much of the empirical foundation of society: they help to construct social reality" (Stubbs, 1996a: 20). The interactive aspect of language use, stressed by Fairclough, Stubbs and

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Halliday (for Halliday see Fairclough, 1995: 17) underlines the collaborative, dialogic nature of learning and discourses. Thus the taking on of others' voices in talk as an induction into particular cultural practices (Maybin, 1994b: 132; see also Fairclough's "inculcation" Fairclough, 1989: 75 and below for a critique of certain aspects of the inculcation concept) is important here. The frames of discourse employed by students in confronting their social environment(s) are, according to this view of communicative acts, collaboratively acquired and practiced. A dialogic model of talk, drawing on concepts developed by Bachtin/Voloshinov sees every utterance in the context of its relationship with other utterances. Words and talk are populated, in this perspective, with the meanings of others (Voloshinov, 1973: 53; Maybin, 1994b: 132). This perspective informs the approach employed here towards the collection of spoken data and to its transcription and analysis and is developed in my use of the term 'embedded speech'.(see particularly Chapters 4, 5 and 6 below).

**The role of language in the acquisition of authoritative voice.**

Language does not merely reflect reality, however. It actively changes reality. Stubbs cites Cameron (1990) where she says: "language does not passively reflect, but actively reproduces inequalities" (Stubbs, 1996a: 61). Weedon, too, points out that common sense attaches importance to experience and authority in order to give legitimacy to individual discourses. The degree of acceptability an assumption enjoys in society depends on the voice of an 'expert' or "by the assumed integrity of the experience of the individual who voices it" (Weedon, 1987: 78), which can justifiably be extended to the authoritative 'voice' of institutions and disciplines.

## **The emergent nature of discourse**

Tannen and Wallat's stress on the "emergent nature of discourse" (Tannen and Wallat, 1993: 58) is useful at this point, as it connects up with the work of Weedon ("It is in language that differences acquire meaning for the individual" - Weedon, 1987: 76), Linde, and Schiffrin discussed above. Dialogic, collaborative acquisition of meaning and construction of discursive identity takes place for Tannen within the 'frames' and 'knowledge schemas' operating in speech, whereby the 'knowledge schema' is understood as "participants' expectations about people, objects, events and settings in the world" (Tannen and Wallat, 1993: 60) which are subject to continual revision in interaction (1993: 61). The "multiple knowledge schemas" or perception structures in use about the object of discussion, setting, time, etc., can be analysed in the surface linguistic forms of the autobiographical narrative (Tannen, 1993c: 53).

## **Language, Ideology and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)**

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) provides a basis for linguistic analysis of students' spoken language which can take account of the production of discourse in interaction, the 'embeddedness' of such discursive practices in the institutional and social context of their immediate production, and which also sees discursive practices as "social practice" which is "socially constitutive", in Fairclough's words: "signifying the world, constituting and constructing the world in meaning" (Fairclough, 1992a: 63-4). Fairclough's contribution to the development of a theory and practice of discourse analysis, though uneven, is impressive and provides the general framework for my own work. Fairclough opts for a 'mix' of analytical tools, including functional linguistics, pragmatics, conversation analysis, and 'critical social theory' (Fairclough, 1992a: 135-6). He takes up Halliday's approach to the enactment of meaning in language in which "Knowledge is transmitted in social contexts, through relationships, ... that are defined in the value systems and ideology of the culture" (Halliday and Hasan, 1989: 5). This perspective offers a way into an examination through students' talk of enactment of knowledge and knowledge acquisition in the academic 'discourse community'. Fairclough himself is, however, extremely sweeping on the subject of institutional discourse(s). His analyses of changes in institutional discourses (e.g. 1995a: 130-166; 1996a; 1996b) employ, at

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most, single institutional texts. For this reason alone, Ivanič's illuminating discussion of the discursive construction of 'institutional identity' through the prism of students' lexical and grammatical choices in writing is a major contribution, employing a richer data mix and a more detailed linguistic and discourse analysis than anything so far offered by Fairclough, or indeed any other representative of 'Critical linguistics' or 'critical' discourse analysis (Ivanič, 1997: 235-279).

### **A three-dimensional approach**

Fairclough's development and use of the term 'discourse' represents nevertheless a felicitous combination of the "social-theoretical sense of discourse" - i.e. "different ways of structuring areas of knowledge and social practice" - with the "text-and-interaction" sense - i.e. extended products of the process of production of spoken or written texts - (Fairclough, 1992a: 3-4). CDA is thus an apt research tool to encompass the 'context of situation' and language/discursive practices I am looking at here. In particular, the 'three-dimensional' concept of discourse and discourse analysis he develops permits a sophisticated approach to data collection and linguistic analysis of language data (the 'ideational' dimension), detailed description and analysis of the social practice encompassed by, and the context of, the case study ('relational') and the constitution of 'identity' and subject positions ('identity' dimension) (Fairclough, 1989: 25; also 1992a: 64-73).

More recent work undertaken by Eggins and Slade (1997) on the analysis of conversation data goes a long way to filling out Fairclough's three-dimensional approach to language analysis by drawing more systematically on Hallidayan functional analysis and, more importantly still, by subjecting examples of conversational discourse to rigorous and extensive discourse and conversation analysis.

### ***The discourse of the academic institution***

The acquisition and the use of particular discourses, as understood from the standpoint of CDA as developed by Fairclough (Fairclough 1989; 1992) takes place in a specific social and institutional context. While this use is subject to the constraints of relations of power within orders of discourse – i.e. in the relations

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between teacher and student, enacted in an organisational micro-context and in the broader context of the political conjuncture, - constraint, as Fairclough is at pains to point out, presupposes the possibility to change (Fairclough, 1989: 28). Thus the language practices in the discourses of students when they are appropriating passively or critically the discourse frames and scripts of academic/institutional discourses, serve also to define 'self' in relation to others. The acquisition of mainstream discourses, analogously to 'new literacies', has a potentially socially empowering yet ambiguous effect on the learners. The tension inherent in interaction and learning contexts and the consequent co-existence of 'official' authoritative discourses with what Sola and Bennett dubbed 'covert' 'sub rosa' discourse (Sola and Bennett, 1985: 121) is inextricably bound up with the complex social meanings expressed in all linguistic behaviour. Through language practices, belonging to specific social or institutional groups, exercising or relinquishing control in interaction and establishing a discursal identity can be signalled and played out. This point is made by Holmes in her discussion of gender identity markers where she writes that "in any particular interaction we draw on [language's] symbolic power to construct a particular identity or identities, and to express our conformity with or rejection of mainstream norms and values" (Holmes, 1997: 195).

Coates makes the similar point that access to different discourses provides access to diverse 'selves' (Coates, 1997: 291), just as entering academic institutions opens a new world "with a different relation to knowledge" into whose academic culture students are socialised (Gunnarsson, 1997: 221-2). There, privileged discourses are learnt and adopted and appropriated. Such "dominant patterns of scholarly ideation" are accessed through interaction and their status as privileged "technologies of speaking or writing" are embedded in discursive practice (Duszak, 1997: 2).

Such privileged technologies of speaking and writing can be understood as the means by which speakers and writers reveal themselves, their credibility, their communicative purposes. Ken Hyland uses the term 'metadiscourse' to cover this practice which, he says, is "integral to the contexts in which it occurs and is intimately linked to the norms and expectations of particular cultural and professional communities" (Hyland, 1998: 438). The link he refers to consists of the

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adoption of a "professionally acceptable persona and a tenor consistent with the norms of the disciplinary community" (1998: 440).

### **Valued and valuable talk**

An extremely useful instance of discourses for alternative socio-rhetorical contexts is provided by Holmes in her examination of women's and men's talk in public places. She differentiates between 'valued' talk and 'valuable' talk. Regarding the former she says:

"One might call it valued talk, since effective contributions clearly have the potential to considerably increase a person's status [...]. Typical examples of such valued contexts would be public meetings, seminars, conferences and formal management meetings, though certain less formal interactions involving influential or significant 'others' may also be contexts where talk is valued as a potential source of increased status." (Holmes, 1992: 134)

Valued talk is characterised by an over-preponderance of challenging, assertive or disruptive utterances and is directed towards exposition and 'display' (Holmes, 1992: 134). 'Valuable' talk, on the other hand, - also called 'exploratory' talk - is concerned more with the "joint negotiation of meaning", is considered to be essentially collaborative-facilitative and 'cognitive' as opposed to expository (Holmes, 1992: 134-5).

The deployment of status-enhancing and exploratory discourses is therefore context-dependent, since "Individuals can only identify their 'own' interests in discourse by becoming the subjects of particular discourses. Individuals are both the site and subjects of discursive struggle for their identity" (Weedon, 1987: 97). Discourses of authority as well as 'sub rosa' discourses are possible versions of meaning, Weedon argues, ways of being a subject, differing modes of subjectivity, and some of these forms of subjectivity are more readily available than others. This 'availability' "will depend on the social status and power of the discourse in question" (Weedon, 1987: 98).



## **Drawing conclusions from language use**

A central question, at this point of the literature review, referring to a core question of this research, is: what are the theoretical options open within a discourse analytical approach to draw grounded conclusions from language data about students' self/identity positions? The literature suggests that common concepts of 'ideology', specifically those found in CDA and critical linguistics, are largely inadequate and ill-fitted for qualitative research which is attentive to the micro-detail of spoken interaction. A differentiated approach, adopting the Foucaultian idea of discourse/truth (Mills, 1997) seems more likely to be able to develop the concepts of knowledge and self in formulating and contesting other discourses, and in any case most likely to avoid the 'pitfalls' of social determinism and/or the 'autonomy' of discourse Fairclough warns against (1992a: 65). The literature suggests further that notions of 'self' and 'identity' are simultaneously connected through complex social-personal biographies to over-arching social relations, realised as practices, discourses and orders of discourse enacted in private and social institutions and knowledge-systems (Ivanič, 1997; Coates, 1997; Gunnarsson, 1997). To unfold these dimensions of 'discoursal identity', and as a bridge towards inference of cognitive processes, the interpretation of the language data collected demands attention to cultural, inter-cultural, and gender discourses (Ivanič, 1997; Duszak, 1997; Gunnarsson, 1997; Farrell, 1997; Drew and Sorjonen, 1997)<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> See also Goddard and Wierzbicka, (1997) on 'cross-cultural discourse analysis', an of DA work which goes "beyond merely describing speech patterns in behavioural terms" (1997: 231) and is sensitive to the links between culture and ways of speaking and aware of the dangers of falling into ethnocentrism. Further, and this is of central importance in research like my own, where more than one language is used in interaction, this approach faces up to the translation and transference difficulties involved in culturally diverse notions and practices of politeness or face. In this approach, rich linguistic resources are listed as elements of an analysis of culturally diverse discourse styles: e.g. questions, imperatives, forms of address, self-reference forms, overt negation acceptability, imprecision and non-specificity, exclamations and discourse particles, socially marked vocabulary (Goddard and Wierzbicka, 1997: 237).

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Taking Fairclough's 3-dimensional approach to discourse as a point of departure, the relationship between the 'relational' and 'identity' functions of language and meaning are brought into focus. Fairclough defines the relationship as follows:

"On the one hand, discourse is shaped and constrained by social structure in the widest sense and at all levels ... On the other hand, discourse is socially constitutive" (1992a: 64).

Discourse, he goes on, "contributes first of all to the construction of ... 'social identities' and 'subject positions' for social 'subjects' and types of 'self'". Discourse "helps" in the construction of social relationships, and "contributes" to forming "systems of knowledge and belief" (1992a: 64). He stresses further on the interdependence of the 'social' which exists and the 'discourse' which is spoken, thought, and practiced (1992a: 65). This caveat against overdetermination of either side of the relationship is important, as it allows Fairclough to propose a more or less differentiated view of the role and effects of 'ideology'. He maintains that "it is not possible to 'read off' ideologies from texts" (1992a: 89) and is at pains to disassociate his view of discursual construction of self and social relations from the 'ideology in general' view developed by Louis Althusser (1992a: 90-91). In the last count – and this is a mark of Fairclough's greater value here than other practitioners of CDA – he is committed to an approach to language and discourse which, he hopes, will be a "powerful resource for studying discursive dimensions of social and cultural change" (1992a: 99). To this end, he tries to combine Foucaultian 'discourse', Bakhtinian 'intertextuality', Gramscian 'hegemony', "text-based discourse analysis, and ethnomethodological conversation analysis for the textual analysis": this array of conceptual strands allows CDA to "combine social relevance *and* textual specificity" (Fairclough, 1992a: 99-100 – *my emphasis*).

### **'False consciousness' and problems of agency**

Other practitioners of CDA are less finely-tuned to dilemmas of ideology and agency. Thus Roger Fowler, though he states that "there is not necessarily any true reality that can be unveiled by critical practice", the conclusion that there are "simply varying representations" (Fowler, 1996: 4) simply does not exorcise his endorsement

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of a definition of 'criticism' that calls into question the "inbuilt deformity which masquerades as reality" (Fowler, 1996: 4). Teun van Dijk speaks about discourse in terms of "controlling the minds of others" and of "false consciousness", only to assert that, of course, the dominated are not just "dupes". Yet he maintains that ideologies are "more fundamental than knowledge" without, however, explaining further the precise relationship he has in mind (van Dijk, 1997: 18-28).

Gunther Kress (1996), like Fowler, claims that the aims of the 'critical' approach in linguistics and discourse analysis were always to unmask injustice ("by uncovering its workings") and throw the system responsible for inequalities into crisis (Kress, 1996: 15). Clearly working from a position of 'truth', the critical approach described by Kress employs terms such as 'inculcate' to describe the process of transforming students' subjectivities to create a 'durable', 'structured' *habitus* (Kress, 1996: 17). A similar approach is adopted by Michelle Lazar, who sees her close linguistic analysis of advertising material to show gender relations as 'critical' in the sense that "it wants to make transparent the reproduction-cum-legitimation of the existing power differential between the sexes" (Lazar, 1993: 447). She, too, uses critical discourse analysis, - a "domain of study, which is concerned with exposing all forms of social injustices" - to "demystify less than obvious connections between linguistic representation, ideology and power" (Lazar, 1993: 447).

Stubbs (1996b) criticises CDA precisely on the score of the relation between language use and knowledge processes. He sees, he says, the dialectical relation in Fairclough's work between language use and social institutions, but he fails entirely to see "cause and effect relations" about "the nature of evidence which textual traces are said to provide of social change"; he remains unconvinced that CDA can deliver testable arguments here (1996b: 105). His criticism is embarrassing for Fairclough and for CDA generally, for his demand that there be "non-linguistic evidence of a pattern of beliefs and behaviour" (1996b: 106) to avoid circularity of CDA theory seems justified.

Ultimately, discursal construction of identity presupposes 'agency', and theories of 'false consciousness' take away from agency much of its significance. The 'ideology position' (e.g. Kress, Fowler, van Dijk) is conceptualised as a position from outside

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ideology. Sara Mills characterizes this as the position of 'truth' or 'critique' (Mills, 1997: 32-3). A 'discourse theory model' (in Foucault's sense), by contrast, sees the academic discourse, the learning discourses, the discursive acquisition of knowledge as the site of *contestation* - not merely as an oppressive instrument of control or distortion - in which subjects are positioned and position themselves across social relations and through wider discourse practices (Mills, 1997: 45). An altogether excellent critical discussion of the 'ideology'/'discourse' argument is provided by Mills in her introductory study of discourse (Mills, 1997: 29-47).

### **Bridging the divide**

Ivanič's attempt to bridge the divide between language and processes of thought and perception and investigate writers' discursive identities is based on her sensitive attention to ethnographic detail. She builds up a mass of private, social, personal, public and institutional detail around the discourse practice of her co-researchers. Thus alongside "social class, ethnicity, gender, physical build" etc, she turns her attention to

"events, encounters and opportunities; hopes, fears and disappointments; values, beliefs and allegiances; self-confidence, anxieties and desires; the tensions and contradictions in their lives, which all bear down on the point of the pen" (Ivanič, 1997: 182).

Without the detailed knowledge built up through study and discussion of texts produced; through taped and transcribed interviews; through observation; through personal knowledge of the institution in question, the "crucial step" from data to theoretical inference could not be taken (Ivanič, 1997: 119-120).

### **Institutional discourse, 'spillage' and enhancing the analysis of discourse**

David Corson finds that as a result of a move towards more pragmatic, semantic text analysis, taking in whole texts and text above the sentence, "the information content of prosodic features, coupled when possible and necessary with the non-verbal language of gestures, laughter, and other body language, now figures much more prominently in the analysis of texts" (Corson, 1995b: 14). This move towards longer

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stretches of discourse, particularly spoken discourse, reflects a move away from the traditional strict dichotomies of written text vs. spoken language (see here the very useful collection of articles in Čmejrková et al, 1994, particularly de Beaugrande, Ivanič, Gülich). Seeing spoken and written discourse as linked on a continuum of shared contextuality (where only the extreme stereotypically spoken and written forms of communication are seen to be mutually exclusive), means recognising the shared modes of discourse organisation that are deployed in the construction of meaning (Ivanič, 1994:182). The field of academic discourse would seem to profit particularly from the "richer conceptualisation of context" that Ivanič proposes (1994: 181). For in academic discourse the mutual enrichment and exploitation of institutional forms of spoken and written discourse gives rise to crossings and "spillage of context", as Corson terms it (Corson, 1995b: 14).

In Kotthoff and Wodak (1997) and Kotthoff (1996) we find a number of excellent examples of work in which these elements of conversational and academic discourse are worked up. Thus, for example, Susanne Günthner (1996) draws out the use of distancing and ironising procedures in talk to heighten interactive solidarity and understanding; the same author (Günthner, 1997) shows how the use of prosodic hyperbole, emotive exaggeration, and intonation function as vehicles of group cohesion. Studies of sectoral and organisational discourse illustrate further approaches for the analysis of the spoken discourse of students. Across different professional and social contexts: medicine and the medical interview (Wodak, 1997; Mischler, 1997); legal and therapeutic mediation (Candlin and Maley, 1997); educational or administrative contexts (Wodak, 1995; Corson, 1995); legal practices (Trosborg, 1997); student communities (Gülich, 1994); political activists (Christmann, 1996); friendship circles (Coates, 1997; Kotthoff, 1996; Günthner, 1997), the linguistic resources which are drawn upon demonstrate that "spillage of contexts" referred to already.

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I have discussed so far what the literature has to say about

- learning biographies
- discourse and discourses of learning
- institutional and academic discourse

I shall turn now to a consideration of the question of context and discourse data because it is central to the kind of data that will be analysed below. Having established that context has a role in interaction as a monitor of meaning, and that individuals manage their interaction simultaneously over a number of interacting/overlapping local and social contexts, I shall pass on to the work of the research interview and the kind of data it produces in this connection.

### ***Different contexts of discourse production***

The question of different contexts is crucial here. Returning again to Fairclough (1989, but more particularly 1992) I take discourse to be at its most basic level "extended samples of either spoken or written language" (Fairclough, 1992: 3) whereby the emphasis is on the interactive origins of such 'text' and on the "processes of producing and interpreting speech and writing, as well as the situational context of language use" (1992: 3). To the interactive production and interpretation of 'text' - here the personal and interpersonal discourse of individual actors - and the larger 'situational context' - here the institutional environment and its discourse(s) - Fairclough adds the social-theoretical dimension, referring to the "different ways of structuring areas of knowledge and social practice" (1992: 3). The 'three-dimensional' understanding of discourse Fairclough proposes which is the model used in this research sees "Any discursive event (i.e. any instance of discourse) ... as being simultaneously a piece of text, an instance of discursive practice, and an instance of social practice" (1992: 4). I therefore use the term 'discourse' for each level of this three-dimensional analytical framework: the micro-discourse of 'conversational' interaction; the discursive practices of the institution or 'academic community'; and the social discourses or orders of discourse employed and drawn upon by researcher and respondents in the construction and constitution of their

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respective identities and social practice. The micro-macro dimensions of the research questions would seem to correspond fully to this use of the concept of discourse and to the research instruments I am employing here<sup>17</sup>

The work of Gunnarsson (1997), and Duszak (1997) on institutional and academic discourse has already been drawn upon. Gunnarsson's analysis of "socialization into the culture of an academic discipline", involving interaction between actors in the institution and deployment of academic discourses and the resulting gendered place of discursive subjects (Gunnarsson, 1996: 223), and Duszak's emphasis on access to academic codes/technologies of speaking and embedded discourse practices in interpersonal communication in academic discourse (Duszak, 1997: 2) both provide examples of attention to micro/macro levels of discourse and their interconnectedness similar to that used here.

### **DA's approach to "context"**

The attraction of the broad sweep of DA for coping with social identities, beliefs, ideological positions and so on, was strongly felt at the outset of this research project. Yet even at its best, I would suggest, DA/CDA is unable to explicate satisfactorily the complexities of everyday speech events, not to mention such hybrid linguistic forms as the semi-conversational research interview. The criticism levelled at CDA for claiming to 'know' the truth behind the discourse, for considering itself in the position to 'unmask' the 'false ideology' of social beliefs and for failing to address satisfactorily the question of knowledge processes (Widdowson, 1998, Stubbs, 1996a) seems broadly justified, particularly as detailed analysis of data is frequently replaced by high inference assertions which reflect the researcher opinion alone (see

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<sup>17</sup> "Analysis of discursive practice should, I believe, involve a combination of what one might call 'micro-analysis' and 'macro-analysis'. The former is the sort of analysis which conversation analysts excel at: the explication of precisely how participants produce and interpret texts on the basis of their members' resources. But this must be complemented with macro-analysis in order to know the nature of the members' resources (including orders of discourse) that is being drawn upon in order to produce and interpret texts, and whether it is being drawn upon in normative or creative ways. Indeed, one cannot carry out micro-analysis without knowing this. And, of course, micro-analysis is the best place to uncover that information: as such, it provides evidence for macro-analysis. Micro- and macro-analysis are therefore mutual requisites. It is because of their interrelationship that the dimension of discursive practice in my three-dimensional framework can mediate the relationship between the dimensions of social practice and text: it is the nature of the social practice that determines the macro-processes of discursive practice, and it is the micro-processes that shape the text." (Fairclough, 1992: 85-86).

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e.g. Fairclough, 1989, 1996a, 1996b; Coulthard, 1996; Fowler, 1984; Kress, 1996; Bowers and Iwi, 1993)<sup>18</sup>. In order to overcome this imbalance between high and low inference - for the choice between the two approaches must be justified by the aims of the research, by its ontological and epistemological rationales - the field of research must be understood as a system or network of mutually conditioning (interactive) *contexts*. The notion of context, in turn, allows us to tackle the question of the relevance of the research data, and of the potential validity of the conclusions drawn from these. While 'truth' in any pure sense is not being sought or claimed here, a careful approach to contextualised language data can produce a data-driven 'fallibilist' study which tries to avoid relying on assertion in the description of its results (Silverman, 1993, 2000; Seale, 1999).

Context, therefore, is centrally important here and increased attention to this allows the focus of this research to be brought to the fore. Fairclough's coherent framework for text analysis offers a felicitous degree of complexity particularly because it distinguishes neatly between various contexts of 'discoursal action' (Fairclough, 1989: 29). Fairclough's *text/interaction/context* framework (1989: 25) - which he sets alongside a corresponding hierarchical order of discourse: *actual discourses/types of discourse/orders of discourse* (1989: 29) - serves as the basic scaffolding for my own approach to the interview data generated in the research interviews I have carried out. At the level of the interview itself - the 90 to 150 minutes of 'talk' - the context is acutely interactive, and encompasses the physical setting and the joint accomplishment of understanding in interactive talk. At a further remove, the interview is embedded in a wider interactive context, including the institutional character of the research interview and its organization, 'longer' sequences of interaction between researcher and respondents (involving questions of access, academic discourses of learning and teaching) and, put simply, the 'long sequences' of experience narrated in the interview and which have evaluative and interpretive significance within the interactive construction of understanding (i.e. Fairclough's stages of interpretation and explanation, in which the cognitive processes of

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<sup>18</sup> The same criticism, in fairness, must be levelled at practitioners of what may be called 'narrative analysis' in the German educational sociological tradition, e.g. Stempel, 1989, Prawda and Kokemohr, 1989, Egger, 1995, Tesch-Römer, 1989 and more.



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participants and "relationships between transitory social events ... and more durable social structures" are developed - 1989: 26-27). Finally, we have the context of social discourses, the social context in which the participants and the institutions involved interpret their roles and positions.

### **Communicative Contexts**

Studying and learning experiences as a set of ongoing experiences lived through over time and perceived as part of an ongoing 'life story' (Linde, 1993) are jointly explored by myself and my respondents in research interviews. This means that the context of the interview and the data resulting from it are to some extent the only means of access to the other, wider contexts operating on and conditioning the interview interaction, yet experienced only through the language (and metalinguistic means) of the immediate interaction. Given that this is an acceptable description of the interview process, it is hardly surprising that definitions of context, the status of 'data' and the relevance of analytical methods are contested.

### **Context as a 'relevance mechanism'**

Van Dijk finds there is large agreement that "Discourse analysis as a discipline deals with the study of text and talk in context" (1999: 291), but points out that there has been little attention to context in its own right. The approach of CA, on the other hand, has stressed the local constitution of context by participants oriented to a particular 'relevant' aspect of a situation (1999: 291). Employing this basic approach, van Dijk, whom we can see as an authoritative representative of cognitive psychology and DA, offers a definition of context that is capable of establishing the necessary connections between DA and CA analytical practice to handle talk, interview and learning experiences. A context is, in his view, "the structure of those properties of the communicative situation that are ostensibly relevant for participants in the production and comprehension of text or talk" (1999: 291). Van Dijk's 'context model' - employing variable 'schemata' and 'mental models' in the context-sensitive accomplishment of understanding (and here one can see certain similarities to Goffman's employment of "context-bound rituals" in the management of everyday contexts - see Silverman, 1993: 130) acts as a "relevance mechanism" (van Dijk, 1999: 292).

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The fact that the CA approach (broadly adhered to in my analysis) suggests that the relevance of interview data is local and context-sensitive is the reason for considerable controversy. Thus Billig (1999a, 1999b) and Seale (1999) to name two recent examples, contest the CA view of interview data. Silverman stresses that participants in social life actively produce a context for what they do into which researchers should on no account think of importing their own assumptions. The research questions, and by extension the construction of interview interaction, should orient towards asking "how participants actively produce contexts for what they are doing together" (Silverman, 1993: 8). Seale, from a position he defines as "subtle realism" (Seale, 1999: 26-27), considers this a too narrow approach, "disallowing the analysis of language as referential in a more or less accurate way to events outside the setting in which the language is produced" (1999: 58). The debate between DA practitioners and representatives of CA, as exemplified in the rather acrimonious debate carried out between Mike Billig (1999a and 1999b) and Emmanuel Schegloff (1999a, 1999b, 1999c) in the pages of *Discourse and Society*, revolves, in fact, around the central question of the 'relevance' of the data 'collected' in the special context of interview talk. There is no place here to dedicate to the intricacies of the debate. It must suffice to reduce the argument to those points that are relevant to this dissertation, namely

- CA and ethnomethodological practices follow Silverman in attesting the participants of talk-in-interaction the ability to construct artfully conversational contexts
- CA relies on detailed recording of conversation which is captured in detailed and accessible transcripts
- CA largely limits the relevance of the data it analyses to the interactional context and eschews generalization to wider contexts
- DA critics maintain that no interactional context is free from influences from wider contexts, and that therefore the data must be enriched by social analysis
- Representatives of DA maintain likewise that the assertion of 'context-specific' or even (social-)'context-free' analysis by CA practitioners is a sign

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of methodological naiveté and that analyses of social forces such as power, sexism and racism cannot be artificially excluded

- Some representatives of DA (e.g. Billig in the debate contributions 1999a and b) as well as those occupying a middle position between both camps (e.g. Seale, 1999) are prone to accord language a more referential value (Seale, 1999: 27).

**Discourse as a "practical, social and cultural, phenomenon"**

What is required is an approach to the analysis of stretches of conversational discourse that is able to synthesize on the one hand the attention of CA practice to the close detail of the work done by people in interaction and, on the other, the elements of interdiscursivity arising from the fact that close interpersonal interaction is simultaneously unfolded within, not just one, but a whole set of overlapping and intersecting communicative contexts.

For van Dijk discourse is precisely such a "practical, social and cultural phenomenon" (van Dijk, 1997b: 2) According to this view, which is in perfect alignment with the broad CA approach I adopt towards my language data, "...language users engaging in discourse accomplish *social acts* and participate in *social interaction*, typically so in *conversation* and other forms of *dialogue*. Such interaction is in turn embedded in various social and cultural *contexts*" (1997: 2). Further, this discourse is characterized by order and organization, not only of ordered series of words, clauses, sentences and propositions, but also of *sequences* of mutually related acts" (van Dijk, 1997b: 2-3).

Thus van Dijk brings in here CA's attention to sequence as well as the consequences of *sequentiality* for questions of *context*. We are dealing with mutually related acts, which stretch over sequences of different length and which are constructed in, and construct, different contexts of action and discursive action.

Language users, van Dijk says, are engaged in talk as speakers, etc, "but also as *members* of social categories", etc., and "by accomplishing discourse in social situations" language users construct roles and identities as members (van Dijk,

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1997b: 3). This, too, connects up with the kind of CA analysis achievable through membership category analysis.

Van Dijk sees connections between diverse interactional contexts via a hierarchy of functions: "... the study of discourse as action may focus on the interactive details of talk (or text) itself, but also take a broader perspective, and show the social, political and cultural functions of discourse within institutions, groups, or society and culture at large" Seen in this fashion, the more detailed micro-actions of complex social practices are *social* acts in their own right: "they are acts *by which* the higher level social practices are being accomplished" (van Dijk, 1997b: 5-6).

### A hierarchy of contexts

The accomplishment of meaning in a hierarchy of interactive contexts is achieved through the sequential unfolding of the interactive resources of setting members.

#### The local aspect of context management

Sequentiality, defined and described in terms of adjacency pairs in conversation turns, functions as an inspection of understanding (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998: 43). Sequence and context are inextricably bound in the process of meaning-making because "social context is a dynamically created thing that is expressed in and through the sequential organization of interaction" (Heritage, 1997: 162). Sequential organization of interaction in CA terms is characterised by three central features:

- context-sensitivity (responding to next things),
- creation of (next) context and
- signalling understanding by so doing

Thus context is built in and through talk and is radically local in its construction (Heritage, 1997: 163).

#### The context of the "wider" environment

The wider contexts in which participants are active are seen as interconnected "ecologies of knowledge" in which situation-specific interactional meanings are

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organized (Miller, 1994: 168). According to this view, which can be used to explicate Fairclough's three-dimensional process of discourse practice, setting members are able to make use of the resources of different, socially organized settings to discursively constitute and reconstitute themselves and the institutional settings in which they interact. The focus is on context-specific practices (Miller, 1994: 160, 166-167). Category membership and asymmetrical discourses are thus accommodated within this view of discursive practices which takes the variation of value accorded different discourses according to interactional status into account (1994: 169).

**CA and contexts**

The CA approach, then, represents an alignment of attention towards predominantly low-inference data analysis methods. CA and the methods it has tried and demonstrated (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998; Heritage, 1997; Silverman, 1998a, 1998b; Deppermann, 1999) employs analytical tools which are convincing on account of their strict reliance on the data collected and avoidance of researcher-generated high inference interpretation (e.g. Günthner, 1996, 1997; Kotthoff, 1996, 1997; Kitzinger and Frith, 1999; Baker, 1997). There are obvious dividends in an analytical method noted for its systematic classification of features of everyday talk-in-interaction. At the same time, its unspoken debt to 'positivist' (Seale, 1999: 70-71) and ('self-conscious') 'naturalist' (Gubrium and Holstein, 1997: 56) research traditions has been noted. The criticism of being overly-technical, and "nit-picking" in character and of being "unable to see beyond the 'micro' level of the 0.2-second pause" is a possible response to the technicalities of some of the 'classic' texts of CA (Kitzinger and Frith, 1999: 300 - ascribed by the authors to feminist researchers) and one which I to some extent share<sup>19</sup>.

However, CA embraces the different levels of context active within the interview through the sequential implicature of meaning across turns and sequences. Linde argues, and I follow her here wholeheartedly, that life stories

<sup>19</sup> The 'classics' I am referring to here are, e.g.: the joint papers of Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson in Kasher 1998, as well as some of Sacks' own lectures, published posthumously by Gail Jefferson (1992, I and II). In his valuable introduction to Sacks' development of CA, Silverman discusses the overly mechanical element in Sacks' later thoughts on the 'machine' he was trying to develop (1998: 65).

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"are of interest both for their own sake and because they can serve as a model for a unified linguistic analysis - one that moves from the level of the individual construction of sentences, through the form of narratives and the social negotiation of narratives, up to the social level of belief systems and their history, and finally to their effect on the construction of narratives" (1993: 3).

Sequence, too, is a part of context. Linde adds: "a life story does not consist simply of a collection of facts or incidents. It also requires sequence, since from sequence causality can be inferred" (1993: 8).

This concludes the discussion of the literature in relation to the broad theoretical approach I shall adopt to discourse and contexts of discourse practice in this study. In the following the question of the interview form employed here and of the work of the interview will be examined

### ***The interview: coherence of questions, methodology and methods***

The advantages of a methodological mix combining ethnomethodology, conversation analysis and a broadly Foucaultian understanding of discourse to develop complementary aspects of each of them are, Gale Miller says, self evident:

"Ethnographies of institutional discourse combine ethnographers' interest in in-depth observations of diverse settings of everyday life, conversation analysts' construction and analysis of transcripts of naturally occurring talk within settings, and the Foucauldian focus on the formulation, dispersion and uses of knowledge within and across social settings" (Miller, 1994: 155-156; see also Miller, 1997).

It is clearly within the scope of a mix of approaches to address various components of the social interaction I wish to explain. The research interview can, for instance, be thematic, more or less biographic or narrative in its approach. The 'fit' between this research's ontological position, i.e. that people's interactions are "meaningful

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properties of the social reality [my] research questions are designed to explore", and the epistemological perspective according to which a legitimate way to generate data on these ontological properties is to "interact with people, to talk to them, to listen to them, and to gain access to their accounts and articulations" (Mason, 1996: 39-40) is a fundamental precondition for research coherence.

### **Between realism and romanticism**

To open up the discussion about my choice of method, it seems useful here to review, however briefly, the strengths and weaknesses of various research interview models, with the aim of clarifying the precise nature of the method I have chosen to adopt, the kind of data my chosen method can generate and the ultimate fit between method, data and theory.

The division for largely descriptive purposes of qualitative interviewing into two opposing camps - 'realist' and 'romanticist' (Silverman, 2000: 122-125) - may in fact do more harm than theoretical good, obscuring the points of contact between both types. Nevertheless, as an initial differentiation, the distinction between the realist approach, which includes much of the traditional ethnographic school (e.g. for Whyte, Lynd and Lynd, Terkel, etc. see the discussion in Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995 Chapter 5: 124-156; Spradley, 1979; McCracken, 1988) and which presumes that the informants' accounts give more or less direct access to reality outside the interview setting and which seeks to limit researcher 'contamination' and bias to a minimum, can be contrasted for critical purposes with the 'romanticist' direction which rather celebrates researcher and researched reflexivity, and, depending on the intellectual provenance of the work (e.g. feminist, postmodern), may see the validity of the interaction as culminating in mutual understanding or even deep emotional feeling (Oakley, cited in Seale, 1998: 208; Douglas, 1985, Miller and Glassner, 1997). I shall return to the question of researcher 'contamination' further below.

The research interview, in fact, can boast an extensive literature, which it is not the aim of this dissertation to even begin to try to review exhaustively<sup>20</sup>. Broad

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<sup>20</sup> Newest additions to the literature which could not be included in this literature review worthy of mention are the articles in the recent *Handbook of Interview Research, Context & Method* (2002), Thousand Oaks, Sage, edited by Gubrium and Holstein, particularly the contributions by Carol

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discussions of the whole field which have proved useful, however, include the more standard handbooks of Cohen and Manion (1994); the always excellent Hammersley and Atkinson (<sup>2</sup>1995), whose prudent critical approach it has always been my aim to follow here; Fontana and Frey (1994); Kvale (1996). Critical discussions of the research interview within the qualitative research framework, discussed in contrast to quantitative survey methods or 'positivist' traditions, or alternatively in the discussion of different qualitative research options include Seale (1998); Mason (1996); the numerous comprehensive treatments by Silverman (1993/<sup>2</sup>2001, 1997, 2000); Hopf (1991, 2000); and Burgess' insights into the context and dynamics of interviewing (1982, 1988).

Turning to arguments of particular positions within the debate around qualitative interviewing, for the 'romanticist' camp Douglas (1985) leads the way. Lather (1988), Finch (1984), and the contributors to Hertz (1997), such as Ellis et al. and Shulamit Reinharz, represent respectively the strong arguments in favour of 'advocacy' (Lather), 'intimacy and trust' (Finch) and shared reflexive relationships and researcher reflexivity (Reinharz) originating in gender and feminist methodological practice. The 'active' interview (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995, 1997; Gubrium and Holstein, 1999), with its sensitivity for reflexivity in interaction, problems such as authorial 'inscription' (Schwandt, 1994), topic, narrative and ethnographic detail, seeks to steer a middle way between the manipulative techniques it believes the 'realist' tradition to be guilty of and the excesses of hyper-reflexivity and emotionalism of some 'romanticist' or gender practitioners. Nevertheless, Gubrium and Holstein discuss with marked appreciation the potential achievements of an 'emotionalist' approach as exemplified by the work of Douglas and Johnson (Gubrium and Holstein, 1997: 64ff) and situate emotional fieldwork at the centre of open questions about representation of research subjects' expressions. A similar position is to be found in Rubin and Rubin (1995) where stress is laid on extensive ethnographic data collection under often unusual conditions, careful immersion in the

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Warren on qualitative interviewing, Johnson on in-depth interviewing, R. Atkinson on the life story interview, Kohler Riessman on analysis of personal narratives, Smith on oral history interviews, and Czarniawska on narrative, interviews and organizations.



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data and attention to 'conversational partnerships', cultural narratives and topics generated by respondents.

The insights into the particular linguistic structures developed in interview interactions and conversation - and this connecting up of the reflexive interview with 'conversational' practices (Burgess, 1982; Rubin and Rubin, 1995; Kvale, 1996; Mason, 1996; Silverman, 1993/<sup>2</sup>2001; Baker, 1997, and many more) is the fulcrum upon which interaction-driven analysis is raised - with particular regard to the development of interactive narrative forms (Schiffrin, 1993, 1996, 1997; Mischler, 1997) and has provided a feasible analytical alternative to the 'representational' view of language, whereby in the course of the interview, themes are sought which are representations of pre-existing data. According to this theme-driven approach to interview talk, analysis proceeds from the *themes* found or identified in the talk to the *thoughts* of the interview respondents: "The words spoken by the respondents and the ideas they are heard to represent are 'the data'" (Baker, 1997: 130). The sociolinguistic narrative model employed by Schiffrin, by contrast, or the approach of a Mischler which is sensitive to the reflexive origin of narratives and their turns and changes across the course of an interview make use of a more sophisticated range of analytical methods than mere 'thought through language to themes' (Schiffrin, 1993, 1996; Mischler, 1997).

The narrative and life story models originating in the work of Labov and Waletzky (Linde, 1993, 1996 and Schiffrin, 1996) are developed in the employment of unstructured interviewing to explain biographical processes, whether those affecting career decisions and professional experience (Linde, 1993) or those transporting pathologies and phobias (Capps and Ochs, 1995). The particular value of these two developments of narrative analysis within the interview for my own work lies in their close study of linguistic devices and in their search for meaning-making (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997: 114) within the bounds of the interview interactive encounter and not exclusively 'outside' the interaction. Other structural approaches ('socialisation' through story-telling in Ochs et al. (1991); 'temporality' and 'emplotment' as ways of conceptualizing 'self' in Polkinghorne (1991); 'global organization' of narratives as expression of the 'lived and earned coherence' of a life

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in Gee (1991) offer alternative, but equally interaction-driven and data-driven meanings of talk in interviews.

Related to the narrative interview of Labovian origin, but wholly unique for its elaborate design and theoretical complexity is the German sociological 'narrative interview' (Hermanns, 1991), founded in the phenomenological tradition of Husserl and the 'Lebenswelt' ('life world') (Husserl, 1986), and developed by Fritz Schütze in a series of dense methodological articles (Schütze, 1976, 1977, 1981 and 1994; see also the recent discussion in English of Schütze's contribution by Jovchelovitch and Bauer, 2000) and deployed by a generation of social scientists and educational researchers (Alheit, 1989, 1992; Alheit and Hoerning, 1989; Hoerning, 1991; Dausien, 1992; Egger, 1995; Hoffmann-Riem, 1989, 1994; Kokemohr and Marotzki, 1989, Rehbein, 1989, etc.). With its strict attempt to reduce researcher 'bias' to a minimum, largely by adhering to the essential tripartite data-generation springs of 'structuring' of a narrative (*Gestaltschließungszwang*), 'detailing' (*Detaillierungszwang*) and 'condensing' (*Kondensierungszwang*), Schütze's '*Stegreiferzählung*' ('impromptu narrative') owes much to the rules of Gricean speech act theory (Schütze, 1976: 184, 196). In many respects Schütze and the practitioners of the *Stegreiferzählung* share the same care for uncontaminated respondent data and careful monitoring of researcher influence as both the traditional survey interview tradition which he sought to distance himself from (Schütze, 1976: 173) and the qualitative 'realist' tendency. He, too, sees the respondents as "a vessel of facts" (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995, 1997) and aims to compare the narratives of individual respondents in order to obtain their 'truth-content' - both of the facts as of the motivations of the respondents (Schütze, 1976: 181).

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**A research interview embedded in interaction and participant reflexivity**

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The 'realist' approach to the interview is, as we saw above, rooted in the view of the respondent as, 'a vessel of facts' with a referential and representational approach to data generation (Briggs, 1986: 42-43). The attempt to steer a way between excesses of referentiality and researcher 'inscription' on the one hand and totalising 'hyper-reflexivity' on the other (Baszanger and Dodier, 1997) suggest a set of approaches to interviewing:

- attention to the particularity of respondents' gender, ethnic, class and other life-contexts as of their 'metacommunicative', i.e. context-driven, methods of communication accomplishment (Briggs, 1986: 2-3) does not necessarily entail 'membership' of the respondent's context, class, tribe or seminar. However important it certainly is to ask questions which 'fit' with your ontological and epistemological perspectives, there can be no '*right*' questions to ask as some researchers argue in harmony with the strict anthropology of ethnographic practice as exemplified by Spradley (Miller and Glassner, 1997: 101-105; Spradley, 1979).
- an attention to the generation of narratives and stories and to the fact also that the collaborative process of interviewing produces all sorts of things, from "elaborate life histories to one-word answers and that these narrative resources which are accessible by close conversational analytic and discourse analytic methods are member resources, which change according to the subjects broached in the interviews and across the interview length, temporally, sequentially and coherently" (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995, 1997: 28, 30-31; Mischler, 1997).
- attention to the fact that researcher and researched reflexivity is in constant change (Reinharz, 1995) and that interview asymmetry cannot be negated or ignored. Elimination of bias and contamination is hopelessly misguided, yet celebration of subjectivity is just as likely to be misguided (see Holstein and Gubrium, 1997: 49-51 on suggestive and directive interviewing).

## **Interview as context and method**

In the following pages, and more particularly in the chapters containing the data analysis carried out on the interviews transcribed during this research, considerable use is made of two exemplary studies (Silverman, 1997 and Peräkylä, 1995) which employ CA methods and perspectives to achieve highly detailed, and highly convincing, studies of talk as action in interactive environments. Both Peräkylä and Silverman are looking at the organisation of interaction (medical counselling interviews) with CA in order to see how the interview accomplishes a certain job. Of course, I am not essentially interested in seeing *how* research interviews do their work. It is rather the work done *in* the interview, the ‘things’ that are ‘done’, *what* is accomplished, in the course of the interview and because of the interview that I focus on here.

The classical objects of CA interest were initially those service or short exchange interactions such as the suicide calls on telephone help lines or group therapy sessions Harvey Sacks used in his early lectures (Sacks, 1992, I Fall-Spring 1964-5, Fall 1965). In other words, the researcher came to the data post-facto and looked at them as “stuff like this” worthy of analysis because they are “fairly interesting” (Sacks, 1992, I: 5-6). Sacks’ rather quaint ingenuousness apart, this remains a dominant motive in much CA and CA-inspired work (Sacks et al., 1998; Schegloff, 1996; Schegloff et al., 1998; Edelsky, 1981/1993; Schiffrin, 1999) - the researcher applies CA methods in order to investigate how “persons go about producing what they do produce” (Sacks, 1992, I: 11).

My interest, however, is to see how this particular type of institutional interaction shapes and constructs talk about learning because the focus of my research and the rationale for employing the interview as the central tool of data collection is the elicitation of a learning biography from each of the student participants involved. thus, the research interview is *both the context and the tool of the research*.

## **Contamination and joint reflexivity**

In further contrast to the work of Silverman and Peräkylä, the aim of the interview here is not to change or radically affect the student respondent. The questioning of

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the researcher does not seek to solve problems, to elicit problems or to lead the student to solve problems. This is not to say that there is not a very strong element of controversiality involved. Nor does this exclude the possibility that students may be led to see or look for solutions to "problems" with their learning biography that they may only have "seen" in the course of the interview. In fact, as we will see in Chapter 4 when we come to look at the various question forms and their coercive, challenging, and threatening force, the interview is very much a contested field of talk. But it must be stressed that the interview is not intended as a means of therapy or counselling. The literature is rich in this area. We have already seen that there is a broad range of views on the interview and reflexivity (see above the comments on the broad differences between 'romanticist' or 'realist' practices). The 'post-modern' practitioners of ethnography, Gubrium and Holstein (1999), Holstein and Gubrium (1995, 1997), Fontana and Frey (1994), see definite justification for provoking *change* as part of the interview process. Some researchers, often associated with feminist ethnography, seek to combat the manipulation of the respondents by an omniscient interviewer, and consequently their method of communion or solidarity (Lather, 1988; Cameron et al, 1992; Hertz, 1997) goes beyond non-committal interviewing and enters a difficult realm of mutual influence in which the researcher inscribes joint experience as interview experience (see Coffey's recent discussion of the 'interpersonal' in ethnographic research in Coffey, 1999: Chapter 3; also Warren and Hackney, 2000: 35-39, on 'gendered' and 'matched' interview formats). The German narrative and ethnographic tradition, as we saw, seeks to remain absolutely neutral (e.g. Schütze, 1976, 1977, 1981, 1994).

### **The local organisation of the research Interview interaction**

My approach, however, sees the interview as embedded in the social experience of the participants and accomplished through their social or institutional (and, in the interview, in their *local*) organisation of the interaction. The words are not the "truth" about things 'out there'. But the words are by and large intentional and are meant to convey and construct meaning. They may not mirror the 'out there', but they refract various and changing elements of that picture and are organised jointly and

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collectively within the bounds of contextual relevance and the sequential organisation of talk and are broadly commonsense-full.

The talk of the interview is a special type of talk, not a normal conversation, but still subject to features present in normal conversation as established in the last 40 years by the practitioners of CA. Seen in this way, talk in the interview is organized locally into:

(a) *Turns and adjacency-pairs*. A turn determines the current speaker and the ratified and expected response and its conditional relevance. First turns determine the direction of the turn-sequence, second turns convey the expected response or its non-fulfilment and consequent requirement for an account for the non take-up; use and timely relinquishment of the 'floor'. Different turn-types (such as adjacency pairs which regularly occur together) function as local controls of understanding and alignment or non-alignment to the co-speaker.

(b) *Sequences*. Sequences are relations of successive utterances. The sequential implicativeness of turns conditions next-utterances and binds the joint accomplishment of meaning sequentially. Narrative and stories must be considered as long-sequences.

According to this approach, "talk amounts to action" (Schegloff, 1986, cited in Peräkylä, 1995: 17). The *action* is unfolded by eliciting views, eliciting evaluations and descriptions of experience by means of different types of questions: direct questions, hypothetical questions, and requests for accounts.

### **Participant cooperation and resistance**

The relative success of account-elicitation depends on the asymmetries at work in the specific interactional relationship. Cooperation in the talk marks shared or accepted discourses. Similarly, cooperation suggests shared understandings, and it suggests unchallenged self-accounts. Rejection or opposition, on the other hand, suggests lack of mutual understanding, signals asymmetrical discourse or different knowledge claims. Thus the CA-based analysis looks at

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- the 'setting up': which establishes the interactional moment
- different types of elicitation:
- the 'account', which includes facts, descriptions, evaluations, judgements, and theories;
- 'narrative', as an example of deepening the discourse on personal biography, experience, events, time, self, and crises;
- 'generalization', which is a request to theorise, to display institutional discourse, to operate as a member of a category;
- 'problem questions', where the student is contested as a discourse member, where the discursial values of the institution are imposed.

### **The research context and category-bound activities**

In the setting up of the interview, the student is selected as a respondent because s/he is an expert. S/he has expert status for the purposes of the interview. This presupposes a certain complicity, which in turn serves as a potential elicitation-preparation. The student may not - nearly never does - know what she is to say, but she is aware that something specific is expected of her. The setting up phase should serve to set the respondent up as a member of a specific category - "respondent", "capable", "knowledgeable", "experienced", and probably, "truthful". Other categories which are likely to operate within the interview context are gender, age, ethnic background, and nationality, to name the most obvious. Professional status, 'real' or assumed (and playing on through the long sequences of talk which unfold), personality, persona (enacted for the interview or embedded in a firmer, more robust life history), mood, and bodily presence all find expression, too, in the interaction and the research work. The last item named, bodily presence or 'embodiment' (Warren and Hackney, 2000; Coffey, 1999: Chapters 4 and 5) brings into play some of the 'unnameables' of the research undertaking: comfortableness in the presence of the other(s), sexuality, attraction, physical awe and distaste, etc. While the respondent cannot always be questioned openly about these factors, towards which a responsible approach on the researcher's side is an ethical must, it is safe to assume that all or many of these influences are constantly shaping the encounter. Further, the

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

genres of talk expected within the institutional context are contested and a source of potential (almost certain) tension, of difficulty in interaction.

### **Summary**

This concludes the discussion of the literature. The critical review of other researchers' contributions to the discussions around experience and biography, life stories and identity, language and voice in discourse practices, the relationship between agency and authoritative social discourses, the local production of meaning in interaction and the ability of the research interview to produce data reflecting the pluri-contextual and interdiscursive management of own and others' discourses has highlighted what I consider to be the central perspective of this study.

The most important elements of this research perspective can be summarized as follows:

- Coherent life stories are the site in which 'biographized' experience is constructed and (re-)worked discursively to produce shared meaning in interaction and a sense of self.
- Discourses constitute and are constituted by those using them. The acquisition of authoritative discourses has a potentially socially empowering yet ambiguous effect on those acquiring such discourse practices. Through language a particular identity or identities can be constructed, through which conformity with or rejection of mainstream norms and values may be expressed.
- It is in the turns and sequences of talk-as-interaction that shared and opposed meanings are constructed. The reflexive research interview employed here is understood as the site of both the local accomplishment of meaning as well as of those heteroglossic and interdiscursive practices that are consistently drawn upon to make meaning interpersonally and socially.

In the next chapter, the steps in the conduct of this research are described, with particular reference to the construction of an electronic corpus of student talk and the presentation and analysis of the language data the corpus contains.



## **Chapter 3 The Conduct of the Research**

### ***The Interview and context of observation.***

As Robert Burgess (Burgess, 1988: 141-142) has pointed out, the physical context, spatial relations and the social context of conversational interaction in research must be taken into consideration in the conduct and analysis of interviews. This means thick and thicker description of the university context of this study, an account of the relationship between my student respondents and myself, and of mine to them, as well as of the location(s) and logistics of the interviews, ethical questions of the research and questions of access.

### ***Data collection***

#### **Interviews**

The number of interviews aimed at from the outset underwent significant changes as feasible workloads crystallized out of the original (over-ambitious) aims. The same is true for other research aims, such as observation of teaching and learning practice, and widespread data collection above and beyond the in-depth interview.

The aim was to collect in-depth interviews and transcribe as many as possible fully for analysis with electronic language corpus analysis software, such as TACT, MonoConc or ATLAS<sub>t</sub>i (see below and in Appendix 1 for details of the construction of an electronic corpus of interview transcripts). The number of transcripts ultimately transcribed sufficiently in order to be included in the corpus remained fixed at seven in total. It is clear, however, that even with this significantly reduced number of full transcripts (the original aim had been to transcribe at least 20 in full!) there are methodological and practical arguments against even such a number. The simplest argument is the sheer weight of work involved in the transcription process. More specific arguments have been made for (seemingly) random numbers of interviews.

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Thus, McCracken, for instance, is adamant that the "long interview" in qualitative research should be used in studies of "no more than eight" respondents. These, too, should be "perfect strangers (i.e. unknown to the interviewer and other respondents)" (McCracken, 1988: 37). Likewise Morse estimates for a phenomenological study of "meaning" and the "essence of experiences" a figure of "approximately six participants" in in-depth conversations (Morse, 1994: 224-225). In similarly biographically-oriented studies in which long narrative interview forms were employed, and which I have found extremely fruitful for my own practice, the data collection methods and extent of the collected data is extremely diverse.

Thus, Gisela Danz, in her study of elderly women teachers' careers before, during and after the Third Reich, employed 11 long interviews, five of which were analysed in detail (Danz, 1990: 166). Rudolf Egger, in his study of adult education biographies in Austria, found 20 unknown respondents for extended narrative interviews (Egger, 1995: 153-155). Gabriele Rosenthal, in her study of holocaust witnesses' biographies used around 110 biographical narrative interviews collected over a period of years by the researcher and her colleagues and students in a number of universities and more than one country (Rosenthal, 1995: 18). Erika Haas conducted thirteen in-depth narrative interviews with six students of working class origin and seven students of academic backgrounds, of whom three were female and four male, four male and three female respectively (Haas, 1999). Anssi Peräkylä had seven hours of transcribed talk in his collection of counselling interviews (Peräkylä, 1995).

Twenty-four long interviews have been collected to date, while anything up to another score or so had been 'announced' by the time this study was completed, and await a date that can be made by myself and the interviewees. My aim has always been to collect as many interviews as possible, there being no methodological reason against this form of data collection. Indeed, everything speaks for the most detailed data collection possible. It was never my intention, however, to transcribe every interview. All those interviews or conversations or chance encounters that are taped or noted post facto, whether transcribed or not, are drawn upon for the detailed description of the context of the research.

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In addition to in-depth interviews arranged through personal contact and which arise out of my teaching contact to the potential student respondents, through judiciously placed notices<sup>21</sup> I attempted to contact students in the first stages of their studies and/or members of study groups. To date, however, my attempts at making contact in this fashion have been almost completely unsuccessful. One channel of contact I only began to exploit at a late stage of the research is that of the Economics Departmental Student Office (something like a faculty branch of the students' union). The help of this office in obtaining other student respondents from outside my own personal field of activity proved, however, to be only of limited, though interesting, use.

#### **Observation**

Observation of lectures attended by those in the first stages of their studies was planned and was most feasible at the start of each Winter Semester as this is the time of greatest influx of freshers in Business Administration courses. The aim here was familiarisation with the 'atmosphere' more than anything else, as the lectures are mass affairs, attended by some hundreds of students. I managed a handful of visits to lectures over the main period in which this research was carried out, though with negligible results as far as data collection was concerned. The lack of consistency or regularity in my attendance at these mass lectures had notable effects on my ability to establish contact with 'freshers' and other 'beginners'. In fact, direct conversation with freshers produced more 'access' problems than expected.

#### **Access and the 'Audio-Tagebuch' (Audio Diary)**

Brief mention should be made of an experiment in data collection which produced no concrete results, but which nevertheless seemed to promise to open up a new vein of data. For the traditional freshers' week in the Business Studies courses in mid October 1999 (i.e. one year into the research), I organised a slot for myself in one of the mass information sessions, where as many as 600 first semester students come together in a rather bewildered fashion. Here I was able to address a mass of students, explain my research interest in their experience, and call for volunteers for

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<sup>21</sup> Egger placed a notice requesting interviewees in five central adult education centres in Graz, Austria. He expected half a dozen or so responses at the most. He received 23, of whom 20 agreed in the end to do the interview with him (Egger, 1995: 153-155).

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ad hoc interviews about their first contact with student and university life, and to suggest that some might like to attempt to put down their reactions and thoughts on tape, provided by me together with a short explanatory text addressing the content and ethics of the project (the so-called "Audio Diary Pack" – see Appendix 3 for the German-language text of the call for subjects). The response was warm and enthusiastic, but ultimately non-committal when it came to action. Despite having left information in strategic points, having visited other lectures and having deposited my "Diary Packs" in the equivalent of the Student Union administration office for interested students to pick up in a casual way, there was no take-up. A talk with a smaller group of freshers subsequently revealed a much stronger sense of diffidence and even mistrust than was felt in the mass meeting. I undertook nothing more in this direction, but the attempt revealed one or two interesting aspects of university life.

### **Researcher position in the field**

A final point is important enough to be worth repeating here: *the precariousness of my presence as researcher in the field*. I have no regular access to any offices, rooms or spaces in which or from which to conduct my contacts with students. While not (yet) reliant on stock cupboards (see Burgess, 1988:141), and though quiet spaces, even extremely inviting offices *can* be organised, I have been reluctant to resort to 'foreign' territory (e.g. the Italian Department, where I have used a perennially-absent Professor's room through my personal connections there) during the majority of interviews as I wished to break down the sense of that 'gulf', to some extent at least, that I mentioned above.

Independently of the final number of transcribed interviews, from the start it was intended to collect interview data, both depth and ad hoc interviews on as continual a basis as is feasible. The bulk of this data complements note-taking and field diary entries and should be seen as an attempt to widen the scope of the data collected and improve my familiarity with as many aspects of the research context as possible. Thus, in a similar way to Burgess' description of his research project, this research is made up of many conversations of different kinds (Burgess, 1988: 140).

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The following table indicates person(s) interviewed, language in which the interview was carried out, the length of the interview in minutes, the physical environment in which it took place, and the rough date. Finally, an indication whether transcription has been carried out in part (P) or in full (F) or not at all (Neg) is given. Those interviews making up the electronic corpus of fully (or near-fully) transcribed interviews are listed first (1-7). All names have been changed. Interview 11 (*Tina*) was conducted over a period of three weeks and is made up of three separate interviews of over 90 minutes each.

	<i>Interviewee</i>	<i>Language</i>	<i>Length "</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>P/F</i>
1	<i>Marie</i>	German	90+	Cafeteria	10/99	(F)
2	<i>Carola</i>	German	90	Italian Dept.	8/98	(F)
3	<i>Torsten</i>	German	90	Italian Dept	8/98	(F)
4	<i>Henry/Carola</i>	German	90	Italian Dept	9/98	(P)
5	<i>Laleh</i>	German	90+	Italian Dept	8/97	(F)
6	<i>Özlem</i>	German	90	Classroom, outside	5/00	(F)
7	<i>Sara</i>	German	90+	Italian Dept	8/97	(F)
8	<i>Henry</i>	German	90	Italian Dept	8/98	(F)
9	<i>Torsten/Alex</i>	German	90	Italian Dept	8/98	(P)
10	<i>Selim</i>	English	90	Company cafeteria	4/01	(P)
11	<i>Tina (#3)</i>	English	300	University interiors	5/00	(P)
12	<i>Altin</i>	German	90	University cafeteria	10/00	(P)
13	<i>Stephan</i>	English	100	University classroom	5/01	(Neg)
14	<i>Wu Xei (Chinese)</i>	English	180	University classroom	4/01	(Neg)
15	<i>Sandra</i>	German	90	University library	9/99	(P)
16	<i>Peter</i>	German	90	University interior	5/00	(Neg)
17	<i>Dirk</i>	English	90	Italian Dept	8/97	(Neg)
18	<i>Wanda/Basia (Polish)</i>	German	90	University classroom	2/00	(Neg)
19	<i>Irina (Croatian)</i>	German	90	University interiors	2/99	(Neg)

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20	<i>Maciek (Polish)</i>	English	45	Italian Dept.	6/98	(Neg)
21	<i>Frau T-W Personnel Manager</i>	German	75	Company office	8/98	(Neg)
22	<i>Philippa (Employed in international company)</i>	German	60	University canteen	9/98	(Neg)

The two respondents *Laleh* and *Sara* had been interviewed before the data collection for this dissertation was begun. They had originally been interviewed for the final project of the Open University module E835. The transcripts had been prepared for a relatively superficial content analysis and were therefore not exploited for analysis of the kind conducted here. Contact with the student *Laleh* was subsequently renewed (though *Sara* proved impossible to re-trace) and the transcript was discussed with her in the course of 1998 after this research had been started.

Individual interviews were carried out, and two pair-groups were interviewed. The first pair to be interviewed, *Torsten* and *Alex*, are close student friends who study together and come from the same local city (Oberhausen – 350,000 inhabitants). The second pair, *Henry* and *Carola*, are chance acquaintances, both in the final stages of their studies, both from my Business English course in Summer-Semester 1998. *Torsten*, *Carola* and *Henry* were interviewed jointly and individually.

### **Questions of access and ethics**

Access to the students was unproblematic from the point of view of knowing them, seeing them and agreeing on a time and place. Their expectations and slight nervousness as to the course and content of the interview required from me that I describe the extent and aims of my research, and particularly the 'destination' of their recorded and transcribed utterances. Reactions ranged from fascinated to slight unease. This was even more clearly the case with *Frau T.-W.* The interview situation represented a crossing of an invisible line which normally organises our daily work relations. *Frau T.-W.* is my employer in my freelance activities in the company in question and her inclusion as an interviewee dated from the earliest phase of the dissertation during which the research sought to investigate the university/business environment.

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The physical environments have already been discussed above. The technical side of the interviews was characterised by a marked improvement in ease and quality after the first three interviews, marked by massive sound quality defects and problems with even modest-sized rooms almost hermetically shielded from outside noise, after I followed some excellent advice<sup>22</sup> and equipped myself with a walkman-sized recorder and a button electronic mike. Not only did the recording quality improve enormously, but there were immediate collateral effects: firstly, the size of the equipment disturbs interviewees less and tends rather to fascinate than to scare; secondly, the compactness of the devices allows drop of a hat chance occurrences to be exploited.

All interviewees and potential interviewees expressed not merely readiness to participate, but apart from natural curiosity and a feeling of flattered self-contentment, expressed surprising enthusiasm. Those who were interviewed also expressed enthusiastic agreement to my suggestion to repeat the process in the future at various stages of their studies, etc. (e.g. before and after important examinations, during and after completion of their diploma-dissertation)<sup>23</sup>.

### **Ethics**

As mentioned already on more than one occasion, the great bulk of my student respondents are students attending my courses in English for Business Studies. I felt constrained to go about my research with considerable care, if not caution. With very few exceptions, these students are dependent on my positive judgement of their work during the semester and in the final written examination which I set and correct. In this area I have the equivalent power of a university professor, in that I am empowered to examine independently, according to my own best judgement and my marks count towards the final diploma result-average. No inconsiderable influence, then, though still some way short of the importance of the main economic subjects

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<sup>22</sup> This advice was given me by Barry Stierer in Manchester in 1998 at the OU EdD Induction.

<sup>23</sup> See here Kvale: "A qualitative interview can be a favourable experience for the interviewee ...A well-conducted qualitative interview can be a rare and enriching experience for the interviewee. It is probably not a very common experience in everyday life that another person – for an hour or more – is interested only in, sensitive toward, and seeks to understand as well as possible another's experiences and views on a subject. In practice, it is often difficult to terminate a qualitative interview: Subjects may wish to continue the dialogue and explore further the themes and the insights of their interview interaction" (Kvale, 1996: 36).

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the students are examined in. Clearly, the willingness or not to comply in some way with my research plans must be seen as presenting students with a dilemma of interest which I am convinced is regularly solved by recourse to a pragmatic acquiescence in my arrangements. Most of my interviewees to date were, I am convinced, genuinely interested in what I was doing and in their role in this process. The most sceptical or puzzled reactions give way to interest and a great reluctance to stop the interview once they 'see' what they 'should do'. For this is the most frequent initial attitude, reflecting the status-relationship between them and myself: "*what should I do?*", or "*is that what you wanted?*".

My strategy was to delay the interview if possible until after all our 'business' was over and done with. When the exams are over and the students have their results, I can presumably assume with some degree of certainty that they no longer feel beholden to me, unless out of a sense of trust or sympathy. On the other hand, precisely because the bands of necessity are severed, it is extremely hard to motivate individuals to meet up again. Other cares take over, and an interview on some puzzling subject is likely to lose any sense of urgency for most people. It is against this late form of diffidence and indifference that I most often had to fight.

A brief corollary of this relative indifference is the difficulty of practising that 'empowerment' of the respondents pleaded for by many authors (Fontana and Frey, 1994; Burgess, 1988; Ivanič, 1997). Sharing the results of an interview, providing transcripts and so on, taxes the research relationship to the full. However curious people may be about the use to which interview transcripts will be put - and they are highly interested in this point - their willingness to take on more than fleeting interest seems extremely limited, which need not surprise anyone. Nor does it represent in itself a problem for the research process. Rather, like all problems, it is a further source of interest and data in its own right.

### **Questions of Transcription**

The theoretical importance of transcription method is more or less universally recognised among DA and CA practitioners. Harvey Sacks' original turn to recorded conversation as a source of data is well-known: "I started to play around with tape



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recorded conversations, for the single virtue that I could replay them; that I could type them out somewhat, and study them extendedly ..." (Sacks, 1992, I: 622). The transcription system developed subsequently by Gail Jefferson serves for most practitioners of transcription as a model of sorts. The choice of transcription system, however, inevitably reflects and conditions the research aims and results (Ochs, 1979).

Opting for a 'whole-data corpus' of collected language - i.e. next to complete transcription of as many interviews as feasibly possible - which was my original aim in conducting this research, has a strong methodological rationale. A near complete corpus would be able to allow the analysis to shift from larger-context linguistic environments across whole interviews and groups of interviews (e.g. word counts, collocations, analysis of broad lexical features, syntactic structures and language registers) to the micro-analysis of turn-taking, repair work, footing, impression management and so on employing the close analytical methods of CA. Near complete transcriptions render the use of computer-aided search and analysis across the whole language database feasible and profitable. Yet, quite apart from the fact that, in fact, a much smaller part of the collection of recorded interviews was transcribed than had always been hoped for, any such corpus remains inevitably incomplete. Apart from the interviews, parts of interviews, drop-of-the-hat communications, remarks, discussions and so on, which are not transcribed to be included in the electronic corpus, the transcribed data remain inevitably partial, and to some extent only provisional.<sup>24</sup>

The experimental nature of transcription methods - including those used in CA - may seem a paradox when the Jefferson transcription conventions are studied (see Schiffrin, 1994; Silverman, 1998), but the creativity necessary comes out well when

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<sup>24</sup> The examples from the literature of pragmatic choices laying down the shape - inclusions and exclusions - of the language database are eloquent on this score. Tannen remarks only in her endnotes in one case (Tannen, 1993b) that "It is clear that paralinguistic and prosodic features ... also function as evidence (of expectations)" (Tannen, 1993b n.10: 54). What she ignored in her analysis of expectation frames is included fairly fully in the language database and electronic corpus in my study. Holmes, too, remarks in an endnote to her study of valued and valuable talk that she used mainly notes of speech events so that "unconscious editing of hesitations, etc., is almost unavoidable" (Holmes, 1992 note 3: 147). The list of exclusions and excuses can be extended further (e.g. Bowers and Iwi, 1993; Moir, 1993; Kitzinger and Frith, 1999).

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Sacks (talking about sounds inside co-selected words in conversation) remarks that "the issue is to pull it [some feature of the talk] out and raise the possibility of its operation", and to "establish for yourself that there is a texture to what these people are doing, that can be put on the transcript ..." (Sacks, 1992, II: 325).

### ***Translation and presentation***

Presentation of the data and the findings therefore presents some interesting hurdles to surmount. Given the technical difficulties of presenting German and English in a word-for-word type translation on account of radically different syntactical structure, and embedded morphological problems, not to mention the problematic nature of exemplifying features of meaning and discourse by recourse to de-contextualised translations, as a rule, translation is employed in this study exclusively in order to provide access to the discussion of German language discourse phenomena. Any attempts to render the prosodic elements of students' discourse must be understood as performing a strictly impressionistic function in this text.

The syllable by syllable use of literal translation (see Goddard and Wierzbicka, 1997: 240, 246, 248 for examples) enriched with grammatical information to render the linguistic-cultural diversity of talk may at times be a way out in order to visualize the analysis to which the data is being subjected. But it is no more than that. The use of 'cultural scripts', the alternative developed and proposed by Anna Wierzbicka (Goddard and Wierzbicka, 1997: 235-236) which makes use of the 'natural semantic metalanguage' developed by Wierzbicka and her colleagues is worth citing. To elucidate the use of discourse particles in Polish the authors provide the following example:

Alez skadze!

but-EMPH where from-EMPH (EMPH = emphasis)

"But (how can you say that)!

Where did you get such an idea from?

You are wrong

I feel something bad when I hear you say that!"

(Goddard and Wierzbicka, 1997: 244)

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Such cultural scripts may certainly have a significant value in rendering individual sections of interview interaction. As a global method for more or less full-corpus transcriptions, however, this is clearly unwieldy. I adopt a similar, simplified, version of this method on a handful of occasions below (see, for example, Chapter 4, p. 95 below for its use with the *Marie* interview). Whichever emphasis is placed on more or less detailed transcription, however, the demands of *faithfulness to the original language of the interaction* and therefore to the *intercultural pragmatics* of the reception process and the explication of the results of data analysis must be attended to in research of this kind.

A separate element of the transcription problem was the question of *colloquiality* versus '*ideal*' representation of speech. The more non-verbal detail is added to the data, the more necessary it becomes to decide on a representation of speaking style, tics, accent, special slang, stress, intonation, etc. I have opted here for a minimal recreation of dialect/pronunciation idiosyncrasies. Students consider themselves by and large to be speakers of Hochdeutsch/standard german and clearly make an effort to reproduce for the institutional encounter of the interview the type of language they presumably take to be that 'standard' register. I have limited my transcription to reproduction of ordinary elision (e.g. '*ich hab*' for '*ich habe*', but have usually reproduced the elided indefinite article '*ne*' or '*(n)en*' in its 'full' form '*eine*' or '*einen*'). On the other hand, I decided from the outset to omit every form of written-standard punctuation as foreign to speech. In its place there are indications of rising or falling intonation (? and \_), pauses, breathing (.h and h), loudness, etc. This means effectively, too, that I have not undertaken the breaking up of the transcripts into 'turns' or 'staves' (Coates, 1997; Mischler, 1997).

Every transcription extract is presented in both languages in the form of a table, in which the transcript (TS) is presented as follows:

1	2	3	4	5
Extract Line No.	Narrative structure Interactive work indicated with →	Interactive work indicated with →	German TS	English TS

Column 1 shows the line number (which is not identical to the turn number) within the present Extract. All Extracts are given a double number, e.g. 5.2, which informs

### Chapter 3 The Conduct of the Research

the reader that this is the second extract in Chapter 5. Column 2 may contain information relevant to the analysis of the TS as narrative. Thus, for instance, this column may contain references to the Labovian phases of narrative – 'Abstract' (Ab), 'Orientation' (Or), 'Complication' (Co), 'Evaluation' (Ev), 'Resolution' (Re), 'Coda' (coda). Alternatively, this column may also contain information (indicated as a rule with a numbered →2) about discourse features (e.g. epistemic discourse →ED), prosody (→Pro) modality (→MP) or self-repair (→SR). Column 3 may contain turn information, and the symbol → is found here where specific turns or moves are highlighted and discussed in the analysis. Column 4 contains the original German TS; column 5 is reserved for the English TS (in italics).

References to interactional work or discourse characteristics of the interview language always refer to the German TS.

### **Plurilingual aspects of the data**

Given my role as language teacher/trainer in both environments, the question of which language - English or German - should be used in interviews and communications is a question which was resolved from case to case. Apart from the methodological and analytical problems this language factor creates for the presentation of discourse analysis results and the selective illustration from transcripts, the very plurilingual conduct of observed lessons, casual communications, written data and interviews guarantees a thick layer of linguistic detail enriching and thickening the ethnographic description proper. Plurilingual elements are present from the moment the dialogue is taken up, and linguistic routines and lexical-syntactic choices are inevitably influenced by the presence of the other(s).

### **Using computers**

#### **Creation of electronic corpora for data analysis**

From the beginning, the method I have used for the management and presentation of the qualitative data collected here is that of the electronic corpus investigation (Dey, 1993: 55-62, Bauer and Aarts, 2000). A collection of texts - a corpus - is stored electronically in order that it may be analysed with textual analysis software capable

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of creating word-counts, listing word-fields, establishing concordances (i.e. numerical and statistical recurrences) or establishing repeated collocations. The literature on the potential application of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (or CAQDAS for short as it is now universally known) is already considerable (for brief overviews, see, for example, Fielding, 2001; Kelle, 2000a, 2000b; Seale, 2002; for more detailed discussions of different aspects of CAQDAS practice, see Kuckartz, 1999; Popping, 2000; Kelle, 1995; Fielding and Lee, 1998). Much of the literature is concerned to combat still widespread fears that CAQDAS means the end of ethnographic and qualitative research as practiced since the grand old days of doing street corner work. The bias of many CAQDAS products towards one direction in qualitative analysis - e.g. grounded theory - is not in question. ATLAS.ti, for example, which I opted to use in this study, is quite clearly based on the methods of grounded theory research (Muhr 1997). The ability to code and retrieve data pertaining to a code is central to the method of 'constant comparison'. Likewise, the analytic memo facility that CAQDAS tools like ATLAS.ti possess are, too, important for grounded theory (Fielding, 2001: 454). The value of these facilities as tools cannot be over-emphasized. They do represent, however, a pre-determination of the analytical process which needs to be taken account of at every step in the process of theory-building. As Kelle rightly points out, there are

"... in fact, quite considerable risks of creating [research] artefacts above all if the user overlooks the difference between the indexing function and the representational function of coding categories .... The researcher should be clear about the significance of the complex algorithms which can be carried out by pressing one single key" (Kelle, 2000b: 501)<sup>25</sup>.

At the same time, surveys of recent CAQDAS use have shown that the danger of the software galloping away with the researcher, so to speak, has been exaggerated (Kelle, 2000b: 500-501). Nevertheless, it is as well to be aware of the potential

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<sup>25</sup> ["Tatsächlich bestehen vor allem dann, wenn der Nutzer die Unterscheidung zwischen der Indizierungsfunktion und der Repräsentierungsfunktion von Codierkategorien vernachlässigt, nicht unerhebliche Risiken, Artefakte zu produzieren. ... erfordert, daß der Forscher bzw. die Forscherin sich beständig Rechenschaft gibt über die Bedeutung der komplexen Algorithmen, die mit manchmal nur einem einzelnen Knopfdruck durchgeführt werden"]

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dangers of over-reliance on the PC. In this study, initial plans to build a considerably larger transcript corpus meant that a greater amount of work was planned on tagging and coding of the 'whole data' corpus. Large cross-corpus searches and retrievals were also planned, and considerable space was to be given to quantitative analysis of discourse phenomena. Stubbs refers to the "deep patterning" of meaning and knowledge in texts: it is observable, he says, "only indirectly in the probabilities associated with lexical and grammatical choices across long texts and corpora" (Stubbs, 1996: 21). For him, a methodological focus on computer-assisted methods of analysis is a natural step given the sheer size of the corpora he employs. Ultimately, the theoretical 'shift' that took place at a relatively early stage in this research away from the large corpus investigation and increasingly towards the close detail of CA work heralded a compromise between the data management and selection possibilities of CAQDAS tools, with all the potential for in-vivo theory building and open coding during the process of comparison and selection of significant extracts for analysis, and the 'craft' work of CA analysis on the transcripts and the audio tapes themselves<sup>26</sup>. I remain convinced that caution and a critical approach to the hidden, technological 'traps' or 'snags' of CAQDAS (Kelle 2000b: 501) are the 'natural' reaction of careful qualitative research. In this perspective, CAQDAS clearly is itself "no more than a craft skill, a new tool to make an old craft more itself" (Fielding, 2001: 454).

#### **Use of CAQDAS and the steps in analysing the data**

The textual analysis software TACT 2.1 of the University of Toronto, a widely used and reliable textual analysis software tool, is flexible enough to allow criteria to be developed as the investigation progresses, and supports a wide variety of presentation possibilities (see Lancashire, 1992). In addition, MonoConc Pro 2.0 (Barlow, 2000) and ATLAS.ti 4.1 (Muhr, 1997) are employed in the concordancing, KWIK-concordancing, word-crunching, tag-searching and coding of the corpus.

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<sup>26</sup> Possibilities now exist, too, with the aid of such CAQDAS tools as C-I-SAID (Code-a-Text Integrated System for the Analysis of Interviews and Dialogues) and CTANKS (Code-a-Text Transcription and Note-Keeping System) to manage the transcripts collected in interviews in text and sound files with considerable transcription presentation and analysis capabilities. See <http://www.code-a-text.co.uk>.

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*Transcription options and the standard employed here, as well as the tagging system used for coding the electronic corpus and the possibilities offered by tag-search facilities of the various software programs referred to above, are given in full in Appendix 1.*

The steps carried out from collection to analysis of data in this research were briefly as follows:

- (1) The first step in analysis is already contained in the theoretical agenda brought to bear on and during the unstructured depth-interview, i.e. the constant critical questioning of question-selection between interviews.
- (2) Field diary memos made during, though mainly after, the interview.
- (3) Transcription and repeated listening to the audio-taped talk; the theoretical requirements of the analysis - i.e. conversation analytical approach to turns, sequences, repair work, etc., - dictate the level of detail included in the transcript (see Appendix 2 for detailed examples of transcription options).
- (4) *Tagging of transcripts with text mark-up to manage data retrieval: word counts, Kwik-concordances of specific language phenomena (e.g. employment of modal particles, topic-setting by gender, collocations and co-occurrences of key concepts). For examples of each of these stages of the CAQDAS analysis, see Appendix 1.*
- (5) Theory-building and coding process by means of open coding of themes and topics in talk, likewise of interactive turns and moves and linking of these via (hyper-linked) memos in a process of on-going comparison and modification. Lists of codes employed in the *Marie* transcript, together with an example from the coded transcript as it appears in ATLAS*t*i is given in Appendix 1.
- (6) After coding, significant coded categories (e.g. for *Marie*, 'narrative', 'resistance', 'knowledge claims', or for the interactive format in the coded transcript extract, 'elliptical questioning' or 'repair' might be relevant) are retrieved. As can be seen in Chapter 4 below and in the further chapters of data analysis, the extracts retrieved for analysis generally represent the result of 'multiple sorts', that is, the extracts represent

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bits of data in which more than one code coincide or are co-occurent (Fielding 2001: 454). Indication of the overlapping or 'nesting' of codes with or within other codes is made, in a very basic fashion, in the chapters on data analysis in the Extract heading. Thus, in Extract 4.8. page 113 below the coded categories are given as :

Categories: Narrative/ elliptical question / resistance/ dispreferred and face-threatening acts

(7) The pre-presentation 'final' step in the analysis of the transcript data is carried out 'offline' (Fielding 2001: 459). The CA analysis of the talk-in-interaction remains the 'craft' element whose supposed imminent disappearance is lamented by those most sceptical of the value of CAQDAS methods (discussed in Kelle 2000; Fielding 2001).

(8) Cross-corpus data analysis (e.g. searches for significant interactive phenomena throughout the corpus, or, alternatively, confirmation of deviant case results) allow selected Extracts to be analysed in connection with Extracts from across the corpus, and for data to be compared and refined. The corpus data for the employment by all respondents of **embedded speech** (<Esp>), which complement theoretically the analysis carried out on *Marie*, *Carola*, *Laleh* and *Sara* individually, can be found and compared in Appendix 1. Likewise, the whole-corpus search for the modal particle '*halt*' - as a comparison to the results given for *Carola* and *Torsten* alone in Chapter 6 - can also be found in Appendix 1.

### Contextualizing data

An important piece of criticism to which the procedure of extracting pieces of data from a corpus for detailed analysis is potentially open, is the risk of 'objective' authorial inscription and serious de-contextualization of the research subjects. The way out of this problem of de-contextualization that I have chosen to follow is to present some of the corpus data in an individual case study ('*Marie*' – see Chapter 4) incorporating considerable fine detail of one case, in which detailed conversation-analytical description of selected, limited crucial phases of interaction is presented and discussed, with wider cross-corpus category analysis of the rest of the corpus. Vignette-style commentaries (see Humphreys, 1999) accompanying a number of the



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more important interviews add, in addition, a further commentary genre, allowing more subjective impressions of the interview context to be aired.

It is time now to address briefly the question of validity and reliability of the data and the results obtained here.

### ***Validity, generalizability and reliability***

#### **Theoretical sampling**

In qualitative research, the choice of case to be investigated and explained is usually seen as being generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes (Bryman 1988, cited in Silverman 2000: 105). Sampling means, in Jennifer Mason's definition, "selecting groups or categories to study on the basis of their relevance to your research questions, your theoretical position ... and most importantly the explanation or account which you are developing" (1996: 93-94). Thus my choice of student respondents, to put the problem simply, is based not on the criteria of finding a statistically representative sample of students with well-established learning discourses and opinions on the subject, for how such discourse practices are accomplished in talk is itself the topic of the research (Silverman 2000: 106).

#### **Validity and generalizability**

Being able to identify, observe, record and 'measure' the concepts I am operating with and being clear about the connection between my data source(s) and research method are the required conditions for validity in this type of research (Mason 1996: 4). Generalizability of research findings signifies that some form of wider claim on the basis of the research and analysis can legitimately be made, and that the results go further than simply stating that the analysis is entirely idiosyncratic and particular (Mason 1996: 24). But David Silverman suggests that perhaps "generalizability" could be replaced by another concept in qualitative case studies of this type: "extrapolation" - as used by Alasuutari (1995, cited in Silverman 2000: 111) might be a better fit, for once the theoretical grounding of the sample has been satisfactorily provided, it remains to demonstrate that "the analysis relates to things beyond the material at hand" (Silverman 2000: 111).

## **Reliability**

Finally, thoroughness, accuracy, care and honesty in the preparation, analysis and presentation of the research data, together with an account and justification of the data generated and their relationship to the research questions sum up the conventional measures of reliability (Mason 1996: 146). The research questions of this study are, I am convinced, valid. And problematic. But, as Michael Moerman says: "...there is nothing intrinsically wrong with asking questions. But it must be done with awareness of its consequences, for the power of a question is also its weakness" (Moerman 1992: 27).

## Chapter 4: An Individual Case Study: 'Marie'<sup>27</sup>

### ***Interactive work of the interview: emerging discourses of learning and self.***

In this first chapter devoted to the analysis of the data produced in the research interviews, the emphasis of the analysis is on the interactional 'work' performed in the interviews.

In this chapter, by means of a close analysis of the 'Marie' interview, the following aspects of student talk in interaction are illustrated:

- The coherent production of accounts and narratives within the interactive formats of the research interview
- The discursual management of asymmetries in talk and the employment of institutional discourse(s)
- Open theorizing in talk and the employment of the voices of significant others
- Talk within and across the boundaries of the research interview and the significance of this for an understanding of discursual identity construction

Within the bounds of the interview talk, the broad areas within which the main 'work' is achieved – the setting up, the allocation of turn-taking rights, the asymmetries of knowledge and interactional institutional status, the discourse function of specific question types and the workings of sequential organisation of the talk on the narration of individual learning biographies and the unfolding of learning

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<sup>27</sup> All the extracts presented from here onwards are accompanied by my own English translations from the German. The text is given in largely 'clean' form - i.e. stripped of most transcription coding except for indication of embedded speech in the text (<ESp>). Where the precise identification of beginning and end of individual sections of embedded speech is necessary, the 'beginning' is marked by <EspB>, the 'end' by <EspE>. The whole text is left in lower case and punctuation is absent.

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discourses – are examined in some detail. For this purpose, the data drawn upon stems from the 'Marie' interview. In this chapter, therefore, 'Marie' - her interactional work in the research interview – represents part of a detailed case study. The case study seeks to illustrate how 'doing being a student' is worked out in the interview context and precisely what meaning-making is achieved. The analysis of the data provided by the Marie interview is intended as *illustrative* of the interaction and the discourses of learning developed by all interview respondents, and the reduced number of references to other interviews at this point merely reflects a compromise with demands of space.

The details of the interview as event and as 'big package' or 'long sequence' are given in Vignette 1.

*Marie, 26*

*Native of Düsseldorf, only child, first family member to go to university.*

*Vocational training, three years, with the Municipal Works Dept of Düsseldorf city, and subsequent employment there.*

*Began studying in 1996.*

*Year abroad in Granada, Spain.*

*First encounter in small group. Took on a presentation of a topic dealing with women in business and later expressed an interest in doing an essay on question of women in business organizations.*

*The interview had been requested in the summer of 1998, but Marie had drifted out of my vision. A chance encounter in the university cafeteria in October 1999 led to the planning of the interview. It was Marie who approached me and reminded me that I had wished to do it. She expressed her interest. A date was fixed. I was keen to interview Marie from the outset because she seemed to be pragmatic and open in her approach to her studies. My enthusiasm to include her in the batch of interviewees rose immediately, however, the moment she came up to me and reminded me of the interview, informing me that she was now back from her year in Spain and that the whole experience had been exceptional. My expectations on this score were to be fully confirmed in the course of the interview.*

*As no other venue was available, we fixed on the area adjacent to the cafeteria as our place of meeting. This is an entrance area, used during the day by students heading for the science block refectory. I had had hopes that the background noise would be negligible. It proved, however, to be devastatingly loud, swelling to an intolerable crescendo as the cooking staff in the adjacent*

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*cafeteria began preparing lunch. Halfway through the 90-minute interview Marie and I changed our situation, seating ourselves inside the cafeteria in one of the most distant corners free, with only inconsiderable improvement to the noise-level, unfortunately.*

*This choice of venue was, naturally, directly motivated by a lack of any alternative. Yet this is only true to a certain extent. Doubtless an empty lecture room might have been found had we gone searching. The cafeteria, on the other hand, quite apart from its obviousness and familiarity to us both, represented a 'visible' environment, which had the advantage of eliminating any problems of unwonted over-intimacy. It was, therefore, an institutional no-where-land in which access and confidentiality were effectively dealt with.*

*The interview ranged over the expected themes contained in my basic agenda: school experiences, the transition from school to vocational training, reasons for progressing from employment to university studies, the choice of university, the choice of degree course, reasons for studying business administration, career aspirations, learning difficulties, learning successes, relations to fellow students and to staff, coping with examinations, developing learning strategies and a student lifestyle.*

*Marie was both diffident and open. She was frequently non-plussed by very general questions and by requests to generalize from her own experience, putting up considerable opposition precisely to the latter.*

Vignette 4. 1

**The 'fingerprint' of the interaction**

The constant positioning which takes place in the interview encounter is played out linguistically. The linguistic phenomena making up the interaction, and appearing in captured form in my interview transcripts, are not analysed primarily as language in the general linguistic sense, but as action, talk as action, whereby the topic of analysis is more properly "framed not as language or talk, but in terms of the phenomena that are constructed discursively ... that is, in terms of what people are doing with words" (Wood and Kroger, 2000: 9). I shall sketch in the main aims and characteristics of this analytical approach to institutional talk, following in the main the principles outlined by John Heritage (1997).

Heritage begins by pointing out that institutional interaction involves "goal orientations which are tied to their institution-relevant identities"; there are constraints in the interaction on what is in order, and there are "inferential frameworks and procedures" which belong to that institutional context. Taken

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together Heritage calls these features the "fingerprint" of the institutional interaction (1997: 163-164). This 'fingerprint' is also described by Gale Miller as belonging to specific institutional contexts, which he variously calls "interpretive hierarchies", "local cultures" or "rhetorical domains" (Miller, 1997: 29). According to Heritage, CA looks for these institutional-relevant forms of interaction in the following organizational features of discourse:

**(a) turn-taking organization:**

This may be fixed, and departures from it may be sanctioned (Heritage, 1997: 165). The structure and phasing is designed in order to achieve an interactional aim; co-construction and co-selection of language elements; structural features like opening, problem initiation, disposal of topics, and closing sequences reflect institutional identities or aims; boundaries, transitions, and misunderstandings depend on institutional roles and differ from the breaks and misunderstandings in ideally more equal everyday conversational interaction (Heritage, 1997: 168).

According to Silverman (1997: 41) the basic structure of the interview format is made of respectively questioner/answerer and speaker/recipient. This "basic structure" of the interview format "appears to be a very simple chain of questions and answers" (1997: 42). The persistence of such chains, he continues, draws on 2 rules developed by Sacks and his colleagues, namely:

- Q(uestion)-A(nswer) is an adjacency pair, and until one is done, the other cannot be done

and

- completion of A (answerer) gives floor back to Q (questioner) (Sacks et al 1998).

The basic interview format is Q-A, then. The local organization of the turns means that turns are contextually highly sensitive. The local context of talk determines in a very significant way the direction taken, and the topics elicited. And, clearly, it is the prerogative of the interviewer as the 'institutional' participant to steer the turn

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development during the interview. It is because the interviewer is accorded a steering role that topic change is, therefore, more marked than in everyday conversation, and "successive topics are segmented from one another" (Peräkylä, 1995: 242). This is clearly one of the prerogatives of the institutional member, to announce and lead in topic changes of an important character. The "topic-solicitor" and "topic-provider" are normally not pre-specified in normal conversation, but in the context of the interview they are (Peräkylä, 1995: 243).

Turning now to the interview with "Marie", the interaction is initiated in a setting-up sequence common to most research interviews in this corpus. This opening is characterised by a set of standard features: the institutional roles of interviewer/questioner and student participant/respondent are established with the interviewer Rob Evans (henceforth *RE*) leading off into a series of differently modulated questions; the theme and type of content is proposed by *RE*; the general scope and thematic range is combined with evaluative standards, laying down a measuring board for the type of discourse proposed as relevant and contextually significant "*Bildungsgeschichte*/career history", further, "*Schule zur Uni*/from school to university", educational choice, choice of subject, and from the third line onwards dyads "important/not important, good/bad" are suggested. The questioner role assumed by *RE* is firmly framed in the request to start talking in the last lines (lines 11-13 - '*so wenn wir jetzt anfangen.../so let's begin now ...*').

*MARIE*: SETTING UP THE TALK

Extract 4. 1

- |    |    |   |                                 |
|----|----|---|---------------------------------|
| 1  | R: | Ja: (8.0) das Thema ist eigentlich        | yeah: the topic is today        |
| 2  |    | heute uhm (2.0) im grossen und            | basically uhm (..) by and large |
| 3  |    | ganzen Bildungs: geschichte (1.0)         | your educational career history |
| 4  |    | <u>und</u> wie (.) ja wie es gelaufen     | (..) and how (.) yeah how it    |
| 5  |    | ist? von der Schule zur Uni (.)           | went? from school to university |
| 6  |    | warum diese Wahl und jene Wahl            | (.) why this choice and that    |
| 7  |    | getroffen worden ist oder dieses          | choice were made or why this    |
| 8  |    | Fach oder ein anderes oder (.) was        | subject or a different one or   |
| 9  |    | war dabei wichtig <u>nicht</u> ? (.) oder | what was important in that,     |
| 10 |    | was war <u>gut</u> oder was war schlecht  | right? or what was good or what |
| 11 |    | (2.0) so wenn wir jetzt anfangen          | was bad (.) so let's begin now  |
| 12 |    | mit einem paar (.) <u>Angaben</u> zur     | with a few personal details     |
| 13 |    | Person                                    |                                 |

It is interesting to examine at greater proximity the way in which the basic activities are effected in the space of this short opening sequence. Thus, for example, the

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theme which is to remain the theme of the interview throughout is proposed immediately. It is noticeable, however, that the theme is proposed in a candidate fashion. The first extremely lengthy pause at the very outset in line 1 (8 seconds) can be seen as tentative preparation of the student respondent, *Marie*, for what is to come. Sacks has written provocatively that "when there is a pause, someone is about to lie" (Sacks, 1992, Spring 1967, Lectures 8-9). Clearly, we may hope at least, that the interviewer is not about to begin to lie at this early stage! The hesitations, hedging devices and prosodic emphasis markers in this micro context can be heard as aligning the extended talk which is about to ensue to the recipient and her sense of appropriateness in this possibly unnerving institutional context.

In the following extract from the *Marie* interview, which within the corpus follows on directly from the previous extract, *Marie* responds to the setting up effected by *RE* and gives a potted account of her educational biography to date.

**MARIE: A BRIEF LEARNING HISTORY**

**Extract 4.2**

- |    |    |                                    |                                |
|----|----|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1  | M: | (3.0) ja (1.5) ich erzaehle        | (3.0) yeah (1.5) I'll tell     |
| 2  |    | erstmal ohne Wertung was ich       | first off without any          |
| 3  |    | ueberhaupt gemacht habe? (1.0)     | judgements what I basically    |
| 4  |    | uhm: ja ich habe das Abitur        | did (1.0) uhm yeah I did my    |
| 5  |    | gemacht in Duesseldorf (1.0) das   | abitur in Duesseldorf (1.0)    |
| 6  |    | war zweiundneunzig glaub ich ja    | that was 92 I think yeah and I |
| 7  |    | und hab ich eine Ausbildung        | did an apprenticeship at the   |
| 8  |    | gemacht bei Stadtwerke Duesseldorf | city services in Duesseldorf   |
| 9  |    | zur Industriekauffrau              | to be an industrial clerk in   |
| 10 |    | vierundneunzig gemacht uhm dann    | 94 and then I went off to      |
| 11 |    | bin da weg zur Uni Duisburg (0.5)  | Duisburg Uni (0.5) yeah and I  |
| 12 |    | ja und da ging ich studieren an    | started studying there and     |
| 13 |    | der Uni und (1.0) da war ich noch  | (1.0) I was sti:ll there (1.0) |
| 14 |    | (1.0) letztes Jahr im August bin   | last year in August I went to  |
| 15 |    | ich da nach Spanien gegangen (2.0) | Spain (2.0) that's about it    |
| 16 |    | das ist im grossen und gan?zen     | really (2.0) uhm (4.0) yeah    |
| 17 |    | (2.0) uhm (4.0) ja was soll ich    | what shall I say what I chose  |
| 18 |    | sagen was ich an der Uni gewaehlt  | to study at the University?    |
| 19 |    | habe? hehehh                       | hhh                            |

*Marie* responds to the de-personalized request for "personal details" to begin with with an extended pause of three seconds, followed by a hedging 'ja'/'yeah' and a further one and a half second pause before attempting a response to *RE*'s request. *Marie*'s introductory words can be seen as an attempt to interpret *RE*'s request and what *Marie* does resembles what Pomerantz has called a "fishing device" (cited in Peräkylä, 1995: 134-135). In fact, in the opening line *Marie* openly declares that she



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will tell ('*erzähle*') what she has *done*. This programmatic statement is further hedged with the modal particle '*überhaupt*' ('*was ich überhaupt gemacht habe*'/'what I basically did') which can be heard as 'down-grading' or concessive, hedging against possible criticism and/or correction, should she have misunderstood the interviewer's request in the first place. Thus, *Marie* orientates to the institutional asymmetry in her and *RE*'s position and 'plays safe' at the outset. It is interesting, too, that *Marie* inserts at line 2 the expression '*ohne Wertung*'/'without any judgement'. It is extremely difficult to translate directly without having recourse to fixed expressions such as "value-free" or "without prior judgement", which clearly possess a different flavour in English than in German. In fact, following the advice of Goddard and Wierzbicka on the translation of pragmatically foreign discourse (1997) we would do well in cases such as these to apply the 'cultural script' method these authors propose. In this light, *Marie*'s opening words can be read as accomplishing the following types of action:

what I shall say is something that can be told

I see this as a first thing to be told - I believe there will be more to be told

I have the impression you will require more to be told

I shall tell it without stating any opinions or allocating any judgements to what I tell

it should be understood as a bare account - my opinions may be different or unexpected

I shall give a bare account of things I have done

As should be evident from this type of reading - however extended - the turn-organization gives essential information about the understanding of the previous turn. *Marie* is uncertain what she *should* relate and therefore constructs her turn accordingly.

Having set up her first response, *Marie*'s further utterances are marked by pauses, hesitation at the outset ('*uhm: ja*'/'*uhm: yeah*') and loud thinking as she carefully does her listing of her school and university history ('*das war zweiundneunzig glaub ich*

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*ja*/'that was 92 I think yeah'). The short account itself which she gives as she runs through her learning career so far is interesting for the uniformity of its construction. Thus we see listed what she 'did' ('gemacht'):

*gemacht habe /ich habe ... gemacht /hab ich ... gemacht /gemacht*  
(lines 3, 4-5, 7-8,10)

This lexical structuring of her simple account is subsequently modulated and continues through almost to the end of this extract, by a switch from what she 'did' to a recasting of this potted career as a series of *moves* in time and geographical space. *Marie* names her vocational qualification and the year of qualification in Düsseldorf and a pause is audible, followed by the change to 'movement' and 'situation' when she says '*dann bin ich weg zur Uni Duisburg*/'and then I went off to Duisburg Uni' (10-11). The choice of words is striking. The 'move' to the 'Uni'<sup>1</sup> appears as a significant life-event, the familiarity of the term 'Uni' suggesting naturalness and logic, the '*bin da weg*' strikingly colloquial and personal in tone (arguably more 'I was off!' than the more sober rendering I have given in the extract translation above). *Marie* strings together over the rest of her turn a flow of movement and situative expressions:

*bin da weg /ging ich studieren /da war ich noch /bin ich ...*  
*gegangen/* (lines 11, 12, 13, 14-15)

Again here *Marie's* account is structured as a rather bare list, telling off the individual stages of her learning biography to date. The time structure and sequencing of the various educational 'moves' is significantly precise, however, and serves as a remarkably clear example of that efficient ongoing construction of meaning which Sacks refers to in connection with the internal 'poetics' of conversational turns (Sacks, 1992, II: 321). In *Marie's* compact life story we hear her selecting within her turn prosodically and grammatically related terms seemingly with ease and great skill.

Having reached the information that she went to Spain, *Marie* stops and the two second pause (line 15) can plausibly be interpreted as reflecting her expectation that she has 'done' everything that was asked of her and that her account, consequently, is

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complete. As no uptake is forthcoming from *RE*, she resumes with a common expression of summing-up ('*das ist im grossen und gan?zen*'/'that's more or less it' - line 16). Note, however the rising tone within the word '*gan?zen*' which conveys *Marie's* renewed querying of the task set her. This is immediately followed by pauses of considerable length, hesitation and hedging ('*uhm*', '*ja*') and this perturbed query is completed with a direct request for instructions: '*was soll ich sagen*'/'what shall I say' (lines 17-18). She finishes her turn openly asking whether she should give the reasons for her *choice* of degree subjects ('*was ich gewaehlt habe*'/'what I chose' - lines 18-19) and tails off in laughter. A number of functions seem to be served by completing her turn in this way. Firstly, she is terminating her turn and is handing the floor back to the interviewer. Secondly, her turn-relinquishment is hearable as an unwillingness to go further into details that may be uncalled for or 'problematic' at this stage in the interview (or perhaps at any point). Thirdly, she is warranting her candidate topic proposal by direct reference back to the interviewer's reference in the opening turn specifically to subject choice.

What we have, therefore, in this detailed analysis of the opening sequence of the *Marie* interview, are indications of the orientation work this respondent performs in order to control the intended meaning of the questioner and to provide an institutionally adequate response. *Marie's* offered response is framed as an account devoid of significant evaluation. The employment of the 'bare account' or 'chronicle' (Linde, 1993: 85-89) delivered here accomplishes *Marie's* orientation to the topic-provider's elicitation because, as Norrick suggests, "Storytellers may thus simply verbalize memories in sequential order to simplify interpretation for listeners accustomed to this mode" (Norrick, 2000: 3). According to this view of temporal sequentiality in remembered talk and full-blown narrative, sequencing increases general 'tellability' and represents a common discourse of narrated time which structures talk. While it is probable that the shared discourse of time allows a narrator to "concentrate on other features in remembering and performing" their stories, and the listener to "orient themselves to more salient organizational features" of the narratives (Norrick, 2000: 3), it also functions as a diffuse discourse of personal disinvolvement from a significant process, namely one's own learning biography.

### **(b) sequence organization and turn design**

*Sequence organisation* means here: structures controlling relations between successive turns in talk-in-interaction (Peräkylä, 1995: 235). Sequential negotiation is employed as a possible source of inferences about the co-participant, and the encounter can be managed in the specific way appropriate to the institutional practice (Heritage, 1997: 169-70).

*Turn design*, on the other hand, has to do with the "details of the verbal construction through which the turn's activity is accomplished" (Peräkylä, 1995: 237). This, too, is important for the "institutionality" of the interaction; the structure of the turns betray the actions to be achieved (Heritage, 1997: 170). Turn design affects the whole construction of talk oriented to significant others in differing interactional fields. Thus, according to Peräkylä the choice of talk is always motivated and received as such:

"Different ways of saying something (and of doing something) involve issues such as syntactic, lexical and prosodic selections. By choosing certain words instead of others, by employing certain syntactic constructions and in uttering words and sentences in certain ways, speakers may orient to their institutional tasks and roles. In short, the turn design may be a central vehicle for accomplishing institutional tasks" (Peräkylä, 1995: 237).

### **(c) lexical choice**

In the same vein, Heritage argues that there is a selection of terms which are orientated to institutional tasks of the speakers; the lexical choices are marked by high context-sensitivity of descriptions fitting the institutional setting (Heritage, 1997: 173-174). The specific types of lexical choice which are encountered in institutional talk can be seen as selected on the basis of their orientation to the speakers' and their co-speakers' institutional tasks and roles, and include general descriptive terms and theoretical categories, syntactic constructions and even the prosodical choices of speakers. In the following extract, which in turn follows on

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from the last, we see *Marie* adopting institutional language when challenged about her aspirations and her choice of degree.

*MARIE*: INSTITUTIONAL LANGUAGE

Extract 4.3

- |    |       |                                     |                                       |
|----|-------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1  | M:    | (4.0) ja was soll ich sagen was ich | (4.0) yeah what shall I say           |
| 2  |       | an der Uni gewaehlt habe? hehehe    | what I chose to study at the          |
| 3  |       |                                     | University? hehehe                    |
| 4  | R:    | zum Beispiel                        | for example                           |
| 5  | (0.5) |                                     |                                       |
| 6  | M:    | uhm das ist ja witzig weil heute    | uhm that's funny because today        |
| 7  |       | "denke ich ueber die Sachen ganz    | "I think completely                   |
| 8  |       | anders nach"" seit ich in Spanien   | differently about that"" since        |
| 9  |       | war? hat mir ja irgendwie die Augen | I was in Spain? it sort of            |
| 10 |       | geoeffnet                           | opened my eyes                        |
| 11 | R:    | ja wieso?                           | yeah how?                             |
| 12 | M:    | =weil: .hh ja: ich ich glaube ich   | =because: .hh ye:s I I think I        |
| 13 |       | war frueher sehr eingeschuechtert   | used to be very frightened            |
| 14 |       | sehr verschuechtert von dem         | very shy because of the school        |
| 15 |       | Bildungssystem uhm=                 | system uhm=                           |
| 16 | R:    | schon in der Schule? oder {erst uhm | in school too? Or {only uhm           |
| 17 | M:    | in}der Schule ja auch schon uhm und | at} school yeah already at            |
| 18 |       | dann und dann ja auch hier an der   | that time uhm and then and            |
| 19 |       | Uni uhm immer diese Anforderungen   | then yeah here too at the Uni         |
| 20 |       | unterdurchschnittliche Studienzeit  | uhm always these demands below        |
| 21 |       | ueberdurchschnittliche Leistungen   | average studying time above           |
| 22 |       | und wenn man das alles nicht hatte  | average <u>performance</u> and if you |
| 23 |       | und nicht Sprachen schon perfekt    | didn't have all that and you          |
| 24 |       | sprach uhm also ich hab immer       | couldn't speak languages              |
| 25 |       | gedacht ich waere mehr so unter dem | fluently uhm anyway I always          |
| 26 |       | Niveau. Hehehe                      | thought I was sort of below           |
|    |       |                                     | standardhh hehehe]                    |

*Marie* had asked whether she should explain why she chose to do what she did. Her uncertainty as to the 'appropriateness' and/or the relevance of such an account is indicated by the lengthy pause before seeking confirmation of the topic requested by the interviewer at the outset (line 1). The 'right' to allocate the next turn is evident in the interviewer's employment at line 4 of a 'first position' question/turn-type. While functioning as a clear encouragement to expand on her degree choice, the non-committal nature of the interviewer's "for example" can be felt as deployment of turn allocation *control* by the interviewer/institutional representative. In effect, the interviewer deploys the *right to require* that the respondent take the floor.

*Marie's* conversation orientation at line 6 ('*das ist ja witzig*' / 'that's funny because ...') is mitigated by a change to an evaluative knowledge claim, underlined prosodically by a marked reduction in speech volume, which leads into a candidate account for her change of ideas regarding her studies. Spain, where she spent an

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entire academic year instead of the originally planned semester (half year), '*hat mir ja irgendwie die Augen geoeffnet*' / 'sort of opened my eyes' (9-10). It is worth noting briefly here, that this short turn, comprising roughly four lines of transcript typescript, contains the bare bones of a full blown narrative, which will be examined in more detail separately in the next chapter, namely (i) abstract/orientation, (ii) complication/evaluation (here, the epistemic '*denke ich über die Sache ganz anders nach*'/'I think completely different about that' - lines 7-8), (iii) resolution/coda (Eggins and Martin, 1999: 233-234). To a further interviewer-directed 'first position' question (line 11: 'yeah how?') Marie proffers a response which suggests that this is a delicate topic and that the value of her answer may be in doubt. In fact, we see from line 12 on a perturbed and hurried uptake followed by a time-gaining inbreath, lengthening of syllables and hesitation before an openly institutional discourse is developed. Her criticism is directed seemingly at the oppressive nature of school teaching and of the 'school system' (or, literally, the 'education system') and she suggests that the extent of her personal growth can be measured by the extent to which she was formerly inhibited by school (and university, as we learn further on). It is precisely the choice of language, however, which is of particular value here in helping on the analysis of Marie's talk. The topic is controversial, as are her own conclusions about teaching and learning, and she seems very aware of possible institutional disagreement, at least, with the generalisation and open theorizing she is required to perform. '*Eingeschuechtert*'/'frightened' during her time in school (again, an alternative translation might be 'cowed!') is hurriedly altered to '*verschuechtert*'/'shy' (lines 13-14), which can be seen as a concessive lexical move, hedging her statement and shifting, within a matter of words, the responsibility for negative learning experiences from the institution to her own make-up as a person. Further, the choice of the adjectives 'frightened/shy' in connection with the "school system" seems a kind of abstract grandiloquence chosen, presumably, for the epistemological requirements of the research interview, i.e. recipient-oriented talk. This lexical direction is consummated in this set of turns by the official agenda Marie sketches in of the demands made by the university as she sees it. Students are required to deliver the highest results within the shortest possible space of time, she claims (lines 19-21). She is evidently employing common terminology heard or

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spoken in connection with the central problem for all Business Studies students, that of the length of studies. It is clearly audible here – and though I have not opted to tag lines 19-21 as embedded speech (Esp), the claim that we are hearing here the official breviary of the representatives of the Faculty is plausible enough and is warranted by my own observations over many years of conversations in, and about, German university studies<sup>28</sup>. *Marie* certainly uses this language as something she has off by rote. The second demand – perfect mastery of languages (23-4)– is supported, too, by my own personal observation in information meetings organised for Business Studies Freshers, as well as in numerous private conversations. Finally, *Marie* sums up by offering as an explanation of her difficulties in the past – and it is interesting how she has cast her talk as part of a sequence that makes a claim to be given further room for development – by positioning herself (“below standard”) as a member of a significant category: as an individual who has passed from an earlier situation through a significant experience (Spain) to a new sense of self. These crucial elements of self-definition through membership of a series of significant categories and by means of a ‘theorized’ learning ‘curve’ (Schütze 1981, 1994, 1995 etc) or ‘trajectory’ (Hoerning 1989) are laid down here, as elsewhere, in *Marie's* narrative deployment of institutional discourse. The role of membership category descriptions (MCDs) and category-bound activities (CBAs) in establishing discursual identity and the validity of biographical experience will be encountered frequently in *Marie's* talk as in that of the other student respondents. The particular function of MCDs are given separate treatment in Chapter 8 below.

#### **(d) interactional asymmetries in talk**

The interview provides evidence, then, of the asymmetrical talk that has been found in interaction in institutional contexts, ranging from courts (Atkinson, 1992) to general practice (Heath, 1992), to AIDS-counselling (Peräkylä, 1995). Asymmetries may be usefully categorised in the following fashion, and the main attention here will be on the usefulness of this analytical perspective *in uncovering the movement of*

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<sup>28</sup> The "Regelstudienzeit" – Regulation Length of Studies – is, and has been a central bone of contention at German universities at least since the middle of the 1970s, since which time I have been active, as student or staff member, at, respectively, the universities of Tübingen, Duisburg and Düsseldorf.

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*discourses of learning and self* through the 'Marie' interview and, subsequently, the other student interviews examined below.

**(i) asymmetries of participation**

Participation in talk is regulated according to the division of roles between layperson and expert, deciding who retains and has a right to the initiative in the interaction and there are normally clear links between roles and tasks and discursive rights and obligations (e.g. interviewer/interviewee) (Heritage, 1997: 175-176). Such asymmetry is present where one side dominates in the use of a certain structure, e.g. questions, particularly as we saw already in Extract 4.3, where the right to maintain the 'first position' in question/answer turns gives the 'questioner' the initiative to direct and determine the discourse.<sup>29</sup>

**(ii) asymmetries of know-how/epistemological asymmetry**

Asymmetrical knowledge-bases are specially significant in institutional encounters. Within the context of the research interviews I carried out here, the elicitation of details about student life, study methods, examinations, essays, availability of help and advice in the Faculty department and student/staff relations was of central importance. The interview co-respondents bring different levels or types of experience to the encounter, with different members' knowledge and potentially significant differences of opinion about what is to be expected, etc (Heritage, 1997: 176-177). This type of asymmetry is particularly evident in the elicitation of directly ethnographic details, in other words, descriptive chunks of talk rich in 'insider knowledge'. Examples of this are given in the following short turn exchanges:

**MARIE: MUTUAL SELF-HELP DURING STUDIES**

**Extract 4. 4**

1	M:	spätestens nach: nach nach zwei	at the latest a:fter after
2		drei Semestern es ist	after two three semesters
3		aufgesplittet worden in die Leute	things split up into people
4		die Klausuren bestanden haben oder	who either passed the exams or
5		nicht_ (2.5) aber die die	not_ (2.5) but the the support
6		Unterstützung war schon da: (.)	was the:re (.) because some
7	→1	dass so Einige gesagt hat <EspB>du	people said <EspB>you should
8		musst es so (jetzt) machen wenn du	do it like this when you do

<sup>29</sup> See here also Silverman for "information delivery" or "advice-giving" in the counselling interview (1997: 42).



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9	jetzt BWL schreibst so waehle	BWL <sup>30</sup> so choose perhaps these
10	vielleicht die Faecher oder hoer	floaters or go to that lecture
11	dir das und das schon mal an und	and that one now and that one
12	das ist vielleicht nicht so	isn't perhaps so important
13	wichtig <EspE> und (1.0) das ist	<EspE> and (1.0) it's like
14	→2 eigentlich noch heute so dass man	that today too people help
15	sich um einander kuemmert	each other

*Marie* provides here insights into informal study methods, where the emphasis is clearly on forms of solidarity and word-of-mouth information, a kind of learning 'subculture'. For the 'outsider', lines 1-5 pinpoint the all-important relationship between examinations and length of studies. How many years a student needs to finish her degree depends, as *Marie* points out, on successful completion of exams within a strict timetable. In developing this 'sub rosa' institutional discourse (Sola and Bennett, 1985<sup>31</sup>), *Marie* opts for an overtly respondent-oriented discourse. She employs the voices or discourse of significant others, and the employment is effortlessly constructed to flow in and out of her own otherwise recipient-oriented talk. Utilizing members' resources in this way, *Marie* is able to introduce other contexts of experience and knowledge into the local context of the interview. This is notably marked by a transition from relatively neutral-institutional lexis (lines 1-7) to the intrusion of colloquial, prosodically concerted lexis and syntax from line 7 (marked, here by →) with audibly intimate conversational tone. This intrusion of significant others' voices renders *Marie's* response 'reliable' - from her 'point of talk' so to speak - because warranted by reference to the category to which she belongs. Heteroglossia as 'embedded speech' will be considered separately below (Chapter 7) in relation to the interview corpus, but as this extract makes clear, the effortless employment of heteroglossia is significant for a number of reasons and will be met with in most extracts in one form or another. For one, the simple use of others' voices is evidently universally warranted by co-participants. Speaking with others' voices (Schiffrin, 1993) is an accepted part of conversational as well as institutional discourse. The 'tellability' of experience in narrative form is raised by reference to 'knowable' worlds, i.e. "What is eligible to be mentioned can ... have interactional considerations." because it marks the operation of "an order of attention to, not just

<sup>30</sup> The abbreviation *Marie* uses here - BWL (pronounced 'bee-vee-ell') stands for *Betriebswirtschaftslehre*, i.e. Business Administration.

<sup>31</sup> In Sola and Bennett's 1985 article, the term 'sub rosa' was used to describe the non-mainstream literacy culture of inner-city school students. I feel, however, that its use is equally justified in reference to the counter-discourses of the student discourse community.

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who you're talking with, but when you talked with them last" (Sacks, 1992 II: 16, *Lecture 1, Second Stories, Fall 1968*). In this case what is tellable is the world of students and students' relationships. *Marie* is providing ethnographically valuable information for the presumably 'institutional' representative, but at the same time she is required to 'ground' her information, and this she does – through informal voices in talk – by referring to a world the interviewer can be expected to know, if not at first-hand. Secondly, apart from improving the tellability of experience, embedded speech seems to be employed as an alternative vehicle to overt theorizing, in order to 'pack' theory into acceptable, tellable, form. Attributing thoughts and theories to significant others creates an in-context (ideational) community from which *Marie* can draw support in her orientation to the interviewer. Generalization, then, and spontaneous, informal theorizing can be presumed in this use of the respondents' members' resources. The language shifts the discourse to the 'life-world' discourse of the members. Thirdly, then, self-identification and self-definition is attempted, in possible contradiction to the institutional identity the interview tends to propose and demand.

Speakers inhabit and operate in different interactional domains, which are given expression by different participant interests and expectations as well as by typical role alignments. Silverman describes these as "interpretive and interactional domains that shape what, when and how utterances are expressed, and how they are received by others" (Silverman, 1997: 188). The next extract provides an example of *Marie's* deployment of student agendas in the context of her imparting specialist domain knowledge.

MARIE: LEARNING TOGETHER

Extract 4.5

- |    |    |  |                                   |
|----|----|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1  | M: | und haben wir die Klausur              | and we prepared the exam and      |
| 2  |    | worberci:tet und dann haben wir        | then normally we passed on the    |
| 3  |    | meistens die Unterlagen                | exam notes or got them to the     |
| 4  | →1 | weitergegeben oder bekommen an         | rest of the group                 |
| 5  |    | den Rest der Gruppe                    |                                   |
| 6  | R: | das ist so eine Art Solidar-           | it's a sort of solidarity {group  |
| 7  |    | {gemeinschaft                          |                                   |
| 8  | M: | .hhh genauhhh) wobei natuerlich        | .hhh exahhctly) although if you   |
| 9  |    | wenn man selber davon profitiert       | profit from it yourself profit in |
| 10 |    | <u>profitiert</u> in Anfuhrungszeichen | inverted commas it didn't bother  |
| 11 |    | es hat mich mich nicht mehr            | me me mostly it was Miriam (name  |
| 12 |    | gestoert meistens waren es Miriam      | changed - R.E.) and me? we were   |
| 13 |    | und ich? wir waren immer: in           | alwa:ys in an exam together       |

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14		einer Klausur vor haben uns	before we prepared and it was
15		eingearbeitet und war es weg	over
16	(2.0)		
17	R:	ja ok und uhm wie war das hat das	yeah ok and uhm how was that did
18		funktioniert? mit den {anderen	it work? with the {others who got
19		die das bekommen	the stuff
20	M:→2	das hat funktioniert}	it worked}
21	R:	die konnten also diese	so they were able to use this
22		vorgearbeitete {Sache benuetzen	prepared {material
23	M:→3	sie haben} es gelernt ja und sind	they} learnt it yeah and most of
24		dann auch meistens durchgekommen	the time they got through ok
25	→4	richtig	

*Marie* develops here the account of student mutual help. At the level of the data she is providing, her account concentrates on the effectiveness of student help methods (→1), and in this regard she counters what she may consider the scepticism behind the interviewer's questions in lines 17-19 and 21-22 with prosodically effective responses. At →2 (20) she uses *RE's* chosen term '*funktioniert?*' ('functions?') in an echo-type example of language co-selection, while at →3 (23), too, she employs the same terse past tense formulation ('they were able to use it?/they learnt it'). *Marie* departs from this more neutral question-answer format at 23-25 to provide a theoretical summing-up (→4). It is notable that she resists the categorization that *RE* offers as definition of the scope and significance of the study group. A 'solidarity group' is evidently not her choice of term. She jumps (overlap at line 7-8) in to agree energetically ('*hhh genauhhh*') and her inbreaths here are audible as possible impatience with the (standard) institutional conclusion the interviewer wishes to proffer as a candidate theory, and recasts the concept to conform to her alternative – more prudently pragmatic – portrayal of student practices. *Marie's* turns from line 11 to the end show evidence of her fending off an unacceptable interpretation of her talk and establishing, by the use of defensively terse formulations, her alternative meaning.

(iii) asymmetrical rights of access to knowledge

A further important area of asymmetry in institutional talk which is central to the organization of turns and sequences in talk and thus to the co-construction of the shared and contended discourses produced in the interview can take the form of *suspension of the right to knowledge*. This is met with in the case of the interviewer who feigns ignorance or refrains from comment where under normal circumstances s/he might be expected to participate in reciprocal turn-taking. Alternatively, this can

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signify the suspension of rights to knowledge, as in the withholding of information which the respondent is confident the interviewer must possess as a result of her institutional role (Heritage, 1997: 179). The basic communication format of the research interview is an expression of this form of asymmetry. The Q-A chain gives the topic-provider (interviewer) enormous space to direct and position. The interviewers' prerogatives as topic-provider allow them to monitor ideas and knowledge prior to the formulation of their own views; setting a topic tends to implicate the co-conversationalist in the interviewer's own formulations; alternatively, alignment to the co-conversationalist in topic-provision can favour the creation of a hospitable environment for talk, with important consequences for matters of politeness and face-saving/face-threatening acts (Silverman, 1997b: 30).

### ***Discourse and delicate talk about learning and self***

In order to examine *Marie's* talk in the interview context in the light of asymmetrical discourse rights, it will best serve my purpose here to follow Peräkylä in dividing questions into four broad types. These are:

- topic elicitations that produce a description (i.e. an account or narrative)
- retrieving 'worry talk' from a body of previous talk (which functions as a control of understanding, as a comment/evaluation and serves as a vehicle for asymmetrical power/knowledge discourse i.e. who has the right to look into troubles?)
- topicalising worry themes in a prior turn, prompting the next turn and its content, and thus serving as a mark of asymmetrical power in talk and as a line of demarcation for acquiescence or resistance on the part of the respondent
- hypothetical questions, which broach 'future worlds' freely.

The methods of elicitation, remaining with Peräkylä, used in these question forms, in turn, fall into three main types:

- retrospective ("how was it?")
- open (is there anything ...?)
- distress-relevant (what is the most important thing?)

(Peräkylä, 1995: 243-256).

The educational biography constructed by each student is a field of considerable uncertainty and not a little contested. The interview situation can be experienced as a threat to the face of the student when raised by a lecturer enjoying significantly more institutional power. Equally, the opportunity to discuss plans, hopes, fears can be liberating or empowering in a way no usual conversation might be.

Making use of these questions and elicitation forms focuses on the different work done by the turns and sequences of the research interview. The retrospective question largely elicits evaluatively-neutral accounts (e.g. Extract 4.2) and evaluation-rich narrative structures (see below Extract 4.6). Retrospective questioning is a prerogative of the topic-provider, in that she/he can set the "projectables" or projected topics of the interview discourse. On the other hand, retrospective questions do not focus on the open-endedness of the present and future and as such align to the knowledge of the student participant as having access to own (past) knowledge/experience.

Open elicitation question forms are, by contrast, potentially particularly significant in eliciting joint, shared construction of the discourse. Peräkylä claims that "This 'client-centred' interactional procedure leading into the realm of problems and worries holds an obvious advantage. If a client names a distressing issue (future-oriented or not) in response to an open-topic elicitation ... then the participants have entered a space of 'problem-talking' in full agreement, through a genuinely shared initiative" (1995: 249). Clearly, Peräkylä is talking here of counselling interview clients and of potentially life-threatening future-oriented (AIDS-related or otherwise) problems. However, I read here for 'distressing issues' those aspects of the learning

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experience which are institutionally problem-(or distress-) related and which are 'dispreferred' in CA terms, because their elicitation is always potentially troublesome or threatening.

Nevertheless, the open elicitation form ("Is there anything you want to talk about?") does not strictly appear in my interview type in the form Peräkylä illustrates. The use of open type questioning in order to elicit voluntary topic-set-up is perhaps particularly unlikely in the institutional frame of our interviews. While the AIDs interview is by very definition a type of "troubles talk", the learning biography interview is significantly less *overtly* problem or distress-oriented. The participation frame is very clearly set up by the interviewer as topic-provider and the student is very seldom asked to volunteer talk at will. An exception is towards the end of the interview when the student is regularly asked if there is anything else? Clearly, here again the interviewer is setting the projectables implicitly.

In the following extract, retrospective questioning and its main function - eliciting narrative - is illustrated. A key to the constitutive elements of the narrative structure are given at the start of the extract in square brackets. The narrative key is given within the German language extract itself in the speaker column with the symbol →.

**MARIE: SPAIN NARRATIVE**

Categories: Retrospective/ Learning Biography Extract

[Ab = 'abstract', Or = 'orientation', Co = 'complication', Ev = 'evaluation', Re = 'resolution', cd='coda']

**Extract 4.6**

- |    |     |   |                                  |
|----|-----|---|----------------------------------|
| 1  | R:  | ja was ist passiert in Spanien?             | yeah what happened in Spain?     |
| 2  | M:  | =ich weiss nich uhm (3.0) (das              | =I don't know uhm (3.0) (I think |
| 3  |     | meine) habe ich meine Ein?stellung          | that) I changed my point of      |
| 4  | →Or | geändert also bin jetzt                     | view? now I'm more self-         |
| 5  |     | selbstbewusster und (.) uhm es ist          | confident and (.) uhm it's       |
| 6  |     | schwer zu erkläeren (4.0) uhm man           | difficult to explain (4.0) uhm   |
| 7  |     | kommt erstmal allein in einem               | you have to cope alone with      |
| 8  | →Co | anderen Land zurecht ich sprach die         | things in a foreign country I    |
| 9  |     | Sprache so gut wie garnicht und und         | hardly spoke a word of the       |
| 10 |     | wurde jetzt auch <u>gezwungen</u> zu        | language and and was forced to   |
| 11 |     | sprechen und es war zum Beispiel            | speak and it was for example     |
| 12 |     | egal ob man einen Fehler macht oder         | unimportant whether you made a   |
| 13 |     | nicht man wurde <u>ermuntert</u> <ESpB>mach | mistake or not you were          |
| 14 |     | doch einfach sprich doch einfach            | encouraged <ESpB>go on do it     |
| 15 | →Ev | <EspE> die Leute waren sehr sehr            | just talk <EspE> everyone was    |
| 16 |     | freundlich und so fing es dann an           | very very friendly and so it     |
| 17 |     | und dann bin ich jetzt auf den              | started like that and then I got |
| 18 | →Re | Trichter gekommen noch Franzoesisch         | the (idea) to learn French and   |
| 19 |     | zu lernen und nach England zu gehen         | to go to England one time        |

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20	mal weil wenn man einmal spricht uhm	because when you begin to speak
21	(1.0) es ist nicht so wie in	uhm (1.0) it's not like in
22	→Co Deutschland da hab ich da mal	Germany I noticed i- in English
23	gemerkt i in Englisch zum Beispiel	for example uhm: it was best not
24	uhm: am besten keinen Fehler machen	to make any mistake you were
25	man wurde dann sofort korrigiert und	corrected straightaway not
26	→cd nicht <u>ermuntert</u> und so (.) hab ich	encouraged and so (.) I just
27	nachher einfach nicht mehr	didn't speak anymore afterwards
28	gesprochen	

On the basis of the information *Marie* has already given about the significance of her period in Spain (Extract 4.3), the interviewer's retrospective question at line 1 sets the topic for *Marie*. In her response, *Marie* prefaces her remarks with a concessive disclaimer ('*ich weiss nich*' / 'I don't know') and a knowledge claim, both of which fail to release her from the sequential obligation set up in the question to provide a rationalization for her previous claim, i.e. that she is now more confident despite having experienced the 'education system' in an altogether negative way (see above Extract 4.3). In fact, in the process of setting up the 'orientation' phase of a narrative which is emerging here, she repeats her disclaimer to the effect that 'it's difficult to explain' (lines 5-6). After a lengthy pause of 4 seconds, she picks up the narrative thread and proceeds through 'complicatory' details at line 8 (concerning linguistic competence in foreign languages), 'evaluative' remarks which bolster the interpretive thrust of her narrative (lines 15-16), through to a coda which fully rounds off the narrative (26-28). *Marie* succeeds in providing a perfectly self-contained interpretation of her experience while satisfying the implicit 'projectables' (because withheld by the interviewer) of the opening question: learning processes, learning experience and ways of making meaning out of them.

Contained within her short narrative, *Marie* proposes a model of learning, albeit little more than a sketch or draft, but skilfully developed nonetheless. The positive learning experience of Spain is for her exemplified by having been 'forced' and 'encouraged' to speak, regardless of mistakes (lines 10-13) and her employment of embedded speech (from line 13) here inserts the foreign context into the local context of the interview, itself at this point the nexus of multiple discourse frames: the interview interaction in course, narration of past events and evocation of the German school and its learning methods. The discursive deployment of prosody (emphasis on both '*gezwungen*'/'forced' and '*ermuntert*'/'encouraged') combined with the empowering discourse contained in the richly rhythmical embedded direct speech

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*'mach doch einfach sprich doch einfach'/'go on do it just talk'* is then echoed in the contrast with the use of *'korrigiert'/'corrected'* and *'nicht ermuntert'/'not encouraged'* and her epistemic coda: *'hab ich nachher einfach nicht mehr gesprochen'/'I just didn't speak anymore'*.

*Marie's* 'Spain' narrative - begun in Extract 4.3 above and continued here, and developed further below in Extract 6.1 - is a striking example of the crisis-like phases of transition which are a central element of the narrative interview and biographical life-course research (Miller, 2000: 27). The discourse *Marie* develops here contrasts her previous state in which her learning was heavily conditioned by inhibition and self-limitation ('I just didn't speak anymore ...') with a transition to a thoroughly new phase in her learning characterised by increased self-confidence and ability. This example of 'biographical work' illustrates how the student respondents "construct and reconstruct their self-view" in response to a changing environment (Miller, 2000: 156). Doing this type of work enables students like *Marie* to structure their experiences reflexively, and by so doing to "practically orient themselves, while dealing with events ongoingly as they go through life" (Fischer-Rosenthal, 1995: 261 cited in Miller, 2000: 157). Qualitative research into the varying difficulties experienced by students from working-class and academic backgrounds on entry into university provides interesting parallels to my corpus of interviews. Thus, Haas (1999) finds that students from non-academic backgrounds pass through a significant 'self-crisis' ("*Ich-Krise*") which nevertheless contains considerable potential for individual growth in adversity (Haas, 1999: 225, 234). In fact, as Haas points out, women students from non-academic households studying in male-dominated faculties – and *Marie* fits this description closely (see Extract 6.1 below) – are doubly beset by the difficulties of the academic discourses of the new learning environment as well as by its gender structures (1999: 164-165). A response to this difficult phase of adaptation can be "an explicitly formulated desire for 'movement', ... for 'things foreign', 'difference' and for uncertainty or non-routine things ..."<sup>32</sup> (Haas, 1999: 234). *Marie's* stay in Spain and her learning experiences there are conceivably examples of such a 'move'.

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<sup>32</sup> ["...zu einer explizit formulierten Lust auf 'Bewegung', ... auf das 'Fremde', das 'Andere' und auf Unsicherheit bzw. Nichtfestgefahrenheit führt".]



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In the next short extract, we have a mix of retrospective and open, elliptical-type question forms. Here we can see that the more open forms, while not entirely corresponding to Peräkylä's models, also perform a theory-generating function, which combines overt interviewer-control with alignment to the co-participant's - Marie's - knowledge rights.

#### MARIE: PRECONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE UNI

Categories: Open retrospective question/elliptical questions/ generalization/ projectables

##### Extract 4. 7

1	R:	und ich weiss nicht bevor man an	and I don't know before you come
2		die Uni kommt wie stellt man es	to the Uni how do you imagine
3		sich die Uni vor (.) oder ist es	the Uni to be (.) or is that
4		schon bekannt? (.) was da	already clear? (.) what happens
5		ablaeuft?	there?
6	(10.0)		
7	M:→1	^ich weiss nicht mehr {was ich	I can't remember {what I thought
8		vorgestellt habe^	then
9	R:	ne? gar nicht?} war es ein	no? not at all?} was it an
10		Abenteuer? (1.0) war es	adventure? (1.0) was it
11		aufregend?	exciting?
12	(2.0)		
13	M:→2	teils (.) ja: es war:: (3.0) es	partly (.) yes: it wa::s (3.0)
14		war natuerlich ein hh Abenteuer	of course it was an hh adventure
15	→3	hehe .hhh aber ich hatte das	hehe .hhh but I was really
16		grosse Glueck? (.) ich hatte am	lucky? (.) on the very first day
17		ersten Tag wenn ich=es gab ja	I had when I=there were these
18		diese Orientierungs{gruppen	orientation {groups

The interviewer here poses an overtly neutral question, yet his own epistemological implication of the respondent's potential answer is laid bare in the series of concessive interrogatives which give a sense of discomfort on his part. The opening '*ich weiss nicht*'/'I don't know' is evidently seen by RE as potentially face-threatening for Marie, as if he might be heard to be questioning her reliability, and thus he turns to first the neutral '*wie stellt man es sich vor*'/'how do you imagine the uni' (whereby the 'you' must be read as an impersonal 'you', corresponding to 'one'), followed by the concessive '*oder ist das schon bekannt*'/'is that already clear?', and tailing off in the markedly colloquial '*was da ablaeuft*'/'what happens', which could as well be translated as 'what goes off there?' Interactional moves like this one can be found throughout the Marie interview and throughout the entire corpus of interviews. The importance of such functional moves – that is, the individual speech functions that may be realized within a turn (Eggins and Martin, 1999: 184-189) – in determining the parameters of the space in which the respondent constructs their discourse(s)

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should not be underestimated. Here, the potentially face-threatening opening produces a silence of 10 seconds, after which *Marie* feels herself obliged to accept the floor (→1). Her response can be seen as resistance to, and possible refusal of, the request to theorize about the past. The further elicitation attempts of *RE*, in the form of a hasty interruption and the offer of the candidate interpretation 'adventure' (9-10) as a description of her initial experience of the university, initially produce only hesitant acceptance, at best half-hearted confirmation (→2). *Marie* finally rejects the 'projectable' proposed by *RE*, and finding her own topic orientation and proposing it energetically (→3), she advances the 'orientation group' as the real projectable and takes over the direction of her own learning narrative. *Marie's* topic-setting re-proposes intrinsically institutional discourses as part of her own learning biography ('I was really lucky...'). She also rejects the interviewer's discourse ('adventure') and corrects the (mis)deployment of her knowledge rights.

### **Distress-relevant elicitation**

In other institutional interviews, such as the counselling interview, the distress-relevant elicitation approach centres on asking about 'concern'. A similar phenomenon in the interaction examined here is the talk about significant challenges in learning, disappointments or frustrations, even failures (e.g. exams, contact or no contact with lecturing staff, organising time and learning and money or whatever; the question about learning and self-development). For the counselling encounter, Peräkylä gives examples in which hedging and projections ("If I was to ask you sort of what ..." e.g. self-repair, hedging, and circular questions) introduce such probes in which delicate or face threatening talk may be involved (Peräkylä, 1995: 253). While, as Peräkylä says, the hedging may be both adapted to allowing the participant to fill the gap or not attend to the cues given, it may also signify in interactions of my type a typical kind of uncertainty and inequality. My hedging devices (see Extract 1 again) herald troubles talk and seek to soften the threat to my respondent's face; the hedging also functions as a let out for the interviewer, in case the other should decide to disattend and go onto another area of talk. But the options for her are not endless, and the floor may be forced on the student. Such an example of the student giving in to the pressure of such elicitation is the previous extract (4.7 above).

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**MARIE: AMBIGUOUS FEELINGS ABOUT SCHOOL EXPERIENCES**

Categories: Narrative/ elliptical question / resistance/ dispreferred and face-threatening acts

**Extract 4.8**

1	M:	und dann (1.0) uhm ich weiss nicht	and then (1.0) uhm I don't know
2		woran es gelegen hat dass die	what was the reason why people
3		Menschen da so viel offener waren	there were so much more open and
4		und interessierter waren ja und	more interested and yeah more
5		und viel positiver in allem und	positive in everything and (.) I
6		(.) ich glaub das hab ich	think I adopted that attitude
7		uebernommen diese Einstellung	
8	R:→1	also bis bis bis vor Spanien war	so until until until before Spain
9		alles ja uhm alles furchtbar=	so everything was uhm everything
			was terrible=
10	M:	=nee nee so <u>extrem</u> war es nicht so	=noo no it wasn't that bad it
11		extrem war es <u>nicht</u> aber (.)	wasn't that bad but (.) greyer
12		<u>grauer</u>	
13	R:→2	grauer	greyer
14	M:	mmhm (2.0) langweilig und grau und	mmhm (2.0) boring and grey and
15		{schwierig	{difficult
16	R:→3	alles?} also {Schule	everything?} {school too
17	M:	nein natuerlich nicht} <u>alles</u>	no of course not} e:verything
18		(1.0) <u>NEIN?</u> ich bin sehr gern zur	(1.0) NO? I always liked going to
19		Schule gegangen aber (4.0) na es	school but (4.0) well you
20		ist man	

Extract 4.8 shows *Marie* delivering a positive judgement of her Spain experience and offering a theoretical justification for her change of attitude. She credits her learning experience to the greater openness and interest shown to her in Spain. Her awareness that her biographical discourse here may be contended is hearable in the hedging at line 6 which suggests uncertainty as to the reception her generalizing may be accorded and her declarative '*hab ich uebernommen diese Einstellung*'/I adopted that attitude' is conditioned by the more careful '*ich glaub*'/I think' (6-7). The open question the interviewer poses at this point, however, goes further than *Marie* evidently intended to go in her implicit judgement of her German schooling and thus represents for her the broaching of a kind of troubles talk she is clearly not inclined to sanction (→1). Initially, *Marie* seeks to relativize the harsh judgement that is being attributed to her ('it wasn't that bad') though her 'but greyer' must be heard as a partial acceptance of the interviewer's interpretation. Once again we can observe the coercive force of a 'first position' question in the interviewer's provocative repetition of 'greyer' at line 13 (→2). This 'echoing' functions as a 'pick-up' elicitation (see below '*The pick-up or up-grade*') which effectively emphasizes *Marie's* use and requires her to expand upon it on the strength of the fact that she herself has introduced the discourse of 'greyness' and therefore she can be obliged to continue

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the topic. A refusal to respond on her part would be dispreferred and would threaten the further course of the interaction. In fact, *Marie* responds with a thread of synonyms hedged by a pause and hesitation, and her resistance to *RE*'s discourse here is still rather implicit than explicit. Her explicit refusal of *RE*'s blanket generalization about her schooling experience at line 16 (→3) goes hand in hand with a modification of the learning discourse she had been proposing, as the role of school in her youth is enhanced and she steps back from the sweeping generalizations of this and the previous extract.

**MARIE: THE DECISION TO GO TO UNIVERSITY AND OTHERS' RESPONSES**

Categories: Hedging/ generalisation/elliptical questions/resistance

**Extract 4.9**

1	R:	wie wie reagierten was war die	how how did they react what was
2		Einstellung der der Leute in den	the attitude of the people in
3		Bueros zum Weitermachen zum an	the offices to your carrying on
4		die Uni gehen und so was haben	studying to you going to the uni
5		sie haben sie gesagt <ESp>ja das	and things like that did they
6		ist eine gute Idee das macht das	did they say <ESp>yes that's a
7		oder so? oder das ist nichts	good idea that's good for that
8		nicht notwendig braucht man	or something? or that's a waste
9		nicht (1.0) oder haben die sich	of time not necessary you don't
10		nicht? geaussert?	need it (1.0) or did they say
			nothing?
11	M:→1	°da muss ich ueberlegen°°	°I'll have to think about that°°
12	R:	Ermunterung? oder (2.0)	encouragement or (2.0) <ESp>go
13		<ESp>mach weiter?	ahead?
14	(1.0)		
15	M:→2	ich kann mich gar nicht daran	I can't remember I didn't ask
16		erinnern ich hab nicht nach	for their opinion at all I just
17		ihrer Meinung garnicht gefragt	told them my decision outright
18		ich hab direkt meinen Entschluss	<ESp>that's how I'll do it (.)
19		geaussert <ESp>so werde ich es	a:nd
20		machen (.) u:nd	

Resistance is framed, too, as a refusal to take up the discourse proposed by the interviewer. Instead, the respondent lays the foundations for her own discourse agenda. In this extract, in which *Marie* is being asked to reflect on the reaction of colleagues at work to her decision to leave the employment she had trained for in the Municipal Works Department in order to start studying at the university, she rejects the assumption that her decision may in some measure have been significantly ratified or resisted by others and instead re-proposes her own agency as the central motive. She ignores the discursual move of the interviewer and presents her own interpretation as the result of her thinking about the matter afresh (→1 and →2).

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Thus, as the previous two extracts should make clear, while the search for shared discourses continually reasserts itself in the hedges and re-orientations of the co-respondents, and while this very co-construction of shared discourse naturally tends to favour the dominant discourse of the institutional context in which the interaction is accomplished, the student respondent is clearly heard to have significant room and resources with which she can contest, reject and ignore the interviewer's discourses and that by so doing, she is able to propose her own discourses, which constitute and are constituted by her learning biography.

### **The pick-up or upgrade and the longer sequence**

By picking up on a reference in the prior turn, this question type "topicalizes" what the participant has brought forward and continues the turn sequence. The significance of such pick ups cannot be underestimated: they mark the talk of the student as significant. Both as a sign of understanding or of supposed understanding, these question types develop and block the learning biography in its unfolding. Examples with *Marie* have already been examined where the interviewer's understanding is confirmed and where it is resisted, sometimes strongly. Attention here is important to co-construction and prosodic echoing as prior turns are utilised as prosodic resources (Peräkylä, 1995: 262)<sup>33</sup>. The coercive element of the pick up question has been demonstrated above at work in Extract 4.8. As we saw there, the understanding control is part of the implicit forcing of the exchange, and the reference to the prior turn exhibits the fact that it was the respondent who first introduced some aspect of the distress-relevant topic (Peräkylä, 1995: 269).

### **Hypothetical questions**

The coercive function of the 'pick-up' question and its significance for the student respondent's ability to 'do being a student' on her own discursal terms rather than on those of the institutional opposite, is inherent, then, in its co-implication of the student's discourse practice in the topic-setting of the interviewer. The same function is shared, and indeed, in Peräkylä's estimation, has even greater effect in hypothetical question-types, in which potentially problematic topics are defined and the

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<sup>33</sup> See also Susanne Günthner's discussion of uses of prosody for the creation of solidarity and understanding in talk (Günthner, 1997).

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respondent is invited to generalise or propose candidate theoretical explanations for general phenomena. In examples of this kind of questioning which we have examined already (4.7.-4.9) there is clear reluctance or even incomprehension in *Marie's* case. The posing of questions about learning and self in such a fashion as to make connections with remarks made over longer sequences and by picking up on ideas expressed in adjacent turns thus has a double-edged effect on the student's ability and readiness to produce shared or dissonant discourses in talk. Peräkylä puts it thus:

"By emphasizing the continuity, [institutional co-participants] locally constitute the topics involved in their enquiries as something that has to be approached and talked about carefully ... On the other hand, they also make it more difficult for the [students – R.E.] to turn down the questions, because it now appears that [they] themselves actually have initiated the themes" (Peräkylä, 1995: 276).

*MARIE: AN EXTENDED EXTRACT – "A LEARNING PROCESS..."*

**Extract 4. 10**

I shall turn now to an extended extract containing epistemic questions and responses, problem questions, face threatening acts, preference organization, and asymmetrical turn and sequence construction. The extract has been divided here into four more convenient-sized sections.

**Section 1: Coping with the unfamiliar university environment**

The interviewer broaches the subject of *Marie's* initial experience of studying with particular reference to examinations and her ability to cope with the new learning methods and environment of the university after school. The questioning is at times close to incoherent, though there is no sign that *Marie* has any difficulty divining the meaning behind the numerous false starts and self-repairs. The interviewer's self-repair at lines 1, 2, 3, 5 signals orientation to the respondent and here the interviewer seems aware that his hearable agenda – that the university was a shock at the beginning – is potentially troubling to *Marie*, if only because he will require her to

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talk about difficult or possibly painful experiences, or at the least she may be required to portray herself as initially having been in difficulties. An outright disavowal of the interviewer's theoretical 'projectable' may equally be heard as arrogance and is as such similarly dispreferred. Thus the candidate scenario at →1 is complemented by the opposite concession at →2. Marie's uptake is cautious, as borne out by the long pauses (lines 11, 13).

- |    |       |  |                                     |
|----|-------|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1  | R:    | wie war? das aber (.) war das              | how was? that but (.) was that      |
| 2  |       | auch eine uhm: ich mein wie die            | also a uhm I mean how was the       |
| 3  |       | Einstellung auch die: diese Art            | attitude the this way of            |
| 4  |       | zu arbeiten auch die Aufgaben die          | working too the tasks too that      |
| 5  |       | an der Uni (.) gestellt werden             | are set at the university (.)       |
| 6  | →1    | war das uhm am Anfang schwierig?           | was that uhm difficult in the       |
| 7  |       | einfach zum Beispiel die                   | beginning? just for example         |
| 8  |       | Klausuren und und das Ganze oder           | the exams and and everything        |
| 9  |       | war das Alles vom Anfang an (.)            | from the beginning (.) was it       |
| 10 | →2    | relativ unproblematisch?                   | relatively unproblematic?           |
| 11 | (2.0) |  |                                     |
| 12 | M:    | mmhm                                       | mmhm                                |
| 13 | (4.0) |  |                                     |
| 14 | M:→3  | es ist <u>witzig</u> ich hab heute eine    | it's funny today I have a           |
| 15 |       | andere Sicht als als damals wenn           | different view to to then when      |
| 16 |       | ich darauf zurueckblicke damals            | I think back at that time I         |
| 17 |       | fande ich es glaube ich                    | found it I think difficult and      |
| 18 | →4    | schwierig? und heute denke ich             | today I think <ESp>you went at      |
| 19 | →5    | <ESp>du bist falsch darangegangen          | it the wrong way that means I       |
| 20 |       | *also dass ich gar nicht                   | was unable to decide between        |
| 21 | →6    | selektieren konnte* was ist                | what is <u>impor:tant</u> for the   |
| 22 |       | <u>wich:tig</u> fuer die Pruefung und      | exam and what <u>isn't</u> what is  |
| 23 |       | was <u>nicht</u> ? was ist <u>wirklich</u> | <u>really</u> difficult and what is |
| 24 |       | schwierig? und was ist nur                 | only other people making you        |
| 25 |       | Panikmache von Anderen_ und ich            | panic_ and at that time I used      |
| 26 |       | hab das frueher uebernommen uhm:           | to be affected uhm: other           |
| 27 | →7    | Anderer sagten <ESp>das und das            | said <ESp>this and this (.)         |
| 28 |       | (.) <u>musst</u> ? du koennen und das ist  | you <u>have</u> to know it and that |
| 29 |       | <u>sehr</u> schwierig (.) das wuerde ich   | is <u>really</u> difficult (.) I    |
| 30 |       | heute nicht mehr machen_ (.) uhm           | wouldn't do that today_ (.)         |
| 31 |       | ich wuerde ja meine eigene Sachen          | uhmm I'd choose myself what to      |
| 32 |       | auswaehlen oder nicht ueberlegen           | do or not worry about<ESp>          |
| 33 | →8    | <ESp>was lernst oder wie lernst            | what are you learning or how        |
| 34 |       | du das                                     | do you learn that                   |
| 35 | (2.0) |  |                                     |
| 36 | R:    | mmhm                                       | mmhm                                |
| 37 | (1.0) |  |                                     |
| 38 | M:    | mmhm:                                      | mmhm                                |
| 39 | R:    | woran liegt das?                           | what's the reason for that?         |
| 40 | (3.0) |  |                                     |

When she does take the floor, she repeats the discursual formula of 'it's funny' (→3) as an abstract/orientation to her micro narrative which we already once before encountered in Extract 4.3. and adopts the interviewer's interpretation, though hedged by a self-interrogative (→4).

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At the heart of *Marie's* micro narrative here, however, is her intricate deployment of embedded speech (→5, 7, 8). It is particularly interesting that *Marie* resorts to internal speech, a form of dialogic thought in which she takes both parts in the dyad, in order (at →5 and →8) to ground her conclusions while theorizing aloud at the interviewer's request. Again her distancing is hearable as a discursual strategy aimed at shoring up her theory claims while avoiding dispreferred responses and the risk of criticism or repudiation. In fact, at →5 the intimate self-complaint ('you went at it the wrong way') is skilfully framed by strongly indexical details and prosodic moves: the epistemic/declarative frame of '*heute denke ich*'/'today I think' on the one hand, and the explicit exegesis couched in a hushed voice '*also dass ich gar nicht selektieren konnte*'/'that means I was unable to decide between ...' (20-21) on the other. *Marie* further elaborates her discourse practice in this turn by 'playing' with balanced alternative categories that aptly illustrate her theoretical claim: at →6, lines 21-25, she ranges 'important/not important' against 'really difficult/other people making you panic'. Her deployment of prosodic emphasis is also noticeable in shoring up the line of argument she is intent here on furthering. *Marie* is effectively finished with her explanations and relinquishes the floor, only to be required to retake the floor by *RE's* open demand for her thoughts on the *cause* of the transformation in learning she has been thinking aloud about.

#### Section 2: A transformation in learning method

28	(.) <u>musst?</u> du koennen und das ist	(.) you <u>have</u> to know it and
29	<u>sehr</u> schwierig (.) das wuerde ich	that is <u>really</u> difficult (.) I
30	heute nicht mehr machen_ (.) uhhh	wouldn't do that today_ (.)
31	ich wuerde ja meine eigene Sachen	uhmm I'd choose myself what to
32	auswaehlen oder nicht ueberlegen	do or not worry about<ESp>
33 →8	<ESp>was lernst oder wie lernst	what are you learning or how
34	du das	do you learn that
35	(2.0)	
36 R:	mmhm	mmhm
37	(1.0)	
38 M:	mhmm:	mhmm
39 R:	woran liegt das?	what's the reason for that?
40	(3.0)	
41 M:	woran das liegt? hh .hh mhmm:	what's the reason? hh .hh mhmm
42 →9	(3.0) ich glaub an: mehr: mehr	(3.0) I think it's because::
43	Selbstvertrauen in mich selbst	I've mo:re more self
44	das ich selber selber sehr gut	confidence in myself I can
45	alleine? entscheiden kann (1.0)	make decisions alone? for
46	alleine vorbereiten kann mmhm es	myself myself really well
47 →10	hat auch im Hauptstudium so	(1.0) prepare for things by
48	funktioniert_ (2.0) also ich	myself mhmm it worked like



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49	glaube der Blickwinkel hat sich	that in my main studies_ (2.0)
50	geändert ich hab mich an andere	I think my point of view has
51	Leute orientiert (2.0) uhhh:	changed I used to orient
52	→11 <ESpB>wie machen <u>die</u> das? wie	myself to other people (2.0)
53	denken <u>die</u> ? wie gehen <u>die</u> daran	uhmm: <ESpB>how do they do
54	wer hat denn hier schon gute	that? what do they think? how
55	Noten geschrieben dann muessten	do they approach that who got
56	die es doch eigentlich	good exam results then they
57	<u>wissen?</u> <EspE> und heute ist es	ought to know by rights?<EspE>
58	→12 ganz anders uhhh: da mache ich es	and today it's completely
59	einfach selber ich gehe dahin	different uhhh: I just do it
60	und: versuche das selber (2.0)	myself I just go there and:
61	°mit dem Unterschied dass sie	try it by myself (2.0) with
62	heute <u>jetzt</u> ° auf <u>mich</u> zukommen	the difference that today they
63	→13 und mich jetzt fragen <ESp>wie	come to me and now they ask me
64	machst es denn? was lernst du	ESp>how do you do that? what
65	denn_	do you learn_
66	R: mhhh und?	mhhh and?
67	(1.0)	
68	M: ich versuche es denen zu	I try to explainhhn hh it or
69	erklä <del>eh</del> hren hh oder weiter zu	pass it on
70	geben	
71	(4.0)	

*Marie* is picked up on her conditional declaration (lines 29-32), namely that if she were to study over again she would make her own choices of subjects and would decide on the order in which she did examinations herself, by the interviewer's demand for further explanation (line 39). *Marie's* uptake is delayed and at →9 she provides a semi-declarative epistemic formula: it is, she believes, a question of having attained more self confidence. Her orientation to the questioner's knowledge demand is suggested in the hedging and repair work at line 42 ('*mehr: mehr Selbstvertrauen*'/'mo:re more self confidence') and lines 44-45 ('*selber selber sehr gut alleine? entscheiden kann*'/'decisions alone? for myself myself'). She becomes more assertive in her explanation of her successful transformation when she underlines her independence, initially hedged (44), then assured (46), and accounts for her success in her main courses by returning to the opening discourse of *change* at →10. At lines 41 and 43 it would seem that *Marie* believes she has said enough and is ready to relinquish the floor to the interviewer, but she is obliged to continue (line 48), with the result that she opts to ground her statements once again in the learning process portrayed as an inner dialogic process involving at →11 self-dialogue and, at →13 the voices of others. *Marie's* simple conclusion is framed in markedly informal, 'insider' language which may be heard as allowing the interviewer into the student members' discourse of exams and marks, in other words an *explicit refusal to theorize in institutional terms* (at →12). *Marie* is in a sense

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mitigating the potential problems involved in going through a learning transformation and is fending off possible scepticism via precautionary understatement. The grander implications of the interviewer's epistemological agenda seem to be portrayed as 'routine', even banal: '*da mache ich es einfach selber ich gehe dahin und versuche das selber*'/'I just do it myself I just go there and try it by myself' (58-60). Yet, retaining the floor, *Marie* is drawn to propose a 'complication' of her disavowal, by further grounding her learning transformation in the new situation. Thus, instead of her going to others in search of assistance, it is *they* who come to *her*, and her skilful deployment of the voices of her co-students at →13 ('*wie machst es denn?*') re-echoes her own words at →11 ('*wie machen die das?*'). Once again, the language of the local context of the interview is invaded by the language of the 'site'. The exploitation of members' resources like this represents an alternative knowledge claim and sets up an alternative discourse of learning practices. I would suggest that this alternative counter-discourse is developed deliberately as a 'correction' to the institutional discourse, represented in essence here by the interviewer. *Marie*, and all other student respondents, when challenged by the official, mainstream institutional discourse to which they are required to conform on a linguistic and theoretical level, re-present a modified version of the initial discourse, a version tailored to *their* version of events, structured by *their* system of knowledge and relate – in 'layers' of speech extending over time and across different experiential sites – 'how it is' in situ for the individuals involved. As such, these alternative knowledge claims are of enormous significance for theoretical inferences advanced here about students' learning discourses, and an attempt to understand their function in the context of the interviews is essential in order to enhance the validity of the conclusions I will ultimately draw concerning students' learning discourses, their learning biographies and the relation between these and the institutional discourses of the university.

Section 3: doing being an '*advisor*'

Briefly, in this third section of the extract, *Marie* is challenged to give a summing-up of her previous narrative and the interviewer provides an institutional-theoretical interpretation of her words: if others come to *her*, she is now an '*advisor*' of others,

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which explicitly challenges her category membership. An 'advisor' is presumably a possessor of special knowledge and experience. *Marie*, at →15 hedges her acceptance/rejection of the term 'advisor' and at →16 – after a lengthy pause heard here as extreme diffidence – hedges again when the interviewer proposes the candidate description of her presumed new status as '*angenehm*'/'pleasant' (75).

72	R:	so: eine Beraterinfunktion?	so: an advisor role?
73	M:→15	ja:::=	ye:::=
74	R:	=ist das also ist das neu? (.)	=is that is that new? (.) and and
75		und und (.) angenehm?	(.) pleasant?
76	(7.0)		
77	M:→16	angene::hm es <u>stoert</u> mich	plea::sant well at least it
78		zumindest nicht	doesn't <u>bother</u> me
79	(4.0)		
80	R:	mhmm es ist nicht positiver?	mhmm it's not any more positive?
81	(8.0)		
82	M:→17	ja: positiv <u>schon</u> aber eh:er es ist	yea:h it <u>is</u> positive but it's
83		jetzt nicht was soll ich sagen es	mo:re it's not what can I say
84		ist nicht so richtig ernst (?)	it's not really that serious (?)
85	(4.0)		
86	R:	was hat eigentlich aber ich meine	what actually but I mean this
87		dieser Blickwinkels uhm Wechsel	point of view uhm the change what
88		was hat eigentlich dazu <u>gefuehrt</u> ?	actually led to that? (2.0) how
89		(2.0) wie kam es dann? (.) war	did it come about? (.) was it the
90		das die <u>Uni</u> die das gebracht hat?	Uni that brought it about? or was
91	→18	oder war es einfach (2.0) wie	it simply (2.0) how can one
92		erklärt man sich einfach (.)	explain that simply (.) that (.)
93		dass (.) mit der Zeit? was anders	after a certain period of time?
94		geworden ist?	something had changed?
95	(5.0)		
96	M:→19	*eine gute Frage**	*a good question**
97	(5.0)		

There are clear asymmetries in dealing with open questioning of this type. Respondents can refuse to cooperate or only partly cooperate in the sustainment of the general/theoretical framework and/or in the development of a discourse based on the projectables put forward in questions by the interviewer. Instances are present here in "*Marie*" (see Extract 4.13 below) as in other interviews in the corpus where responses such as "*Ich weiß nicht*" (I don't know!) or "*Ich hab nicht darüber nachgedacht*" ("I haven't thought about that") represent potential organization of this type of unequal knowledge orientation. The topic-providing interviewer may in such cases use downgrading methods like: "Just guess!" (Peräkylä, 1995: 314). The directive power here is openly and ostentatiously *mitigated* to remove face-threatening potential. The student respondent is positioned epistemologically as *not privy* to certain knowledge sets.

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Returning again to the extract, further pressure from the interviewer is met largely with pauses and non-uptake (→17). The interviewer's response to this resistance is to revert to the less threatening approach of asking for a more general statement, which is heard as an invitation to participate in joint theorizing. Thus at →18, after serious difficulties in formulating a direct question (over lines 86-90), he asks for a non-subjective explanation: '*wie erklart man sich einfach*'/'how can one explain that simply?' (91-92). Marie's response is non-committal and is sandwiched between by long pauses (→19). She can be heard as acquiescing to the proposed agenda of the interviewer, and as signalling acceptance of the theoretical discourse he is setting up as a frame or script of learning experience.

Section 4: "I think that you grow..."

In this last section, Marie returns to the original topic-setting and re-proposes her narrative of transformation which was initially cast as an *internal*, counter-discourse experience, in the garb of a more obviously *institutional* discourse of learning. She acquiesces to the interviewer's request for general, open theorizing, and at →20, and →21 grounds her previous narrative in temporally-sequential learning experiences, in which she describes plausible steps in her understanding and draws a preliminary conclusion about the value of her learning methods. Her own words ('*Mensch das war viel besser*'/'hey that was much better') are appended at →22 as an unchallengeable knowledge claim and her assumption here is presumably that she has satisfied the theoretical demands of the interviewer's open questioning. In fact, she relinquishes the floor until forced to add more detail and return to the 'institutional' lexis once again by providing the significantly hedged coda at lines 114-115: 'it's I think just a learning process'. In the following lines of the extract at →24 and →26, Marie resists the interviewer's topic-forcing (direct at →23 and considerably more face-threatening at →25) and seems very reluctant at this point to accept his agenda. I believe we may plausibly view this reluctance as evidence of the student respondent's attention to the discourses which are developed over longer sequences of talk, including over temporally distant sequences of talk which transcend the immediate local context. If Marie here is cautious in her statements, it is likely that this is the effect of the interviewer/interviewee relationship as well as

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the institutional student/lecturer relationship of some standing. Knowledge rights – openness and trust notwithstanding – are not equal in this discourse context. She finds that she herself and her ideas are being *monitored* and is therefore prudent in her formulations. This is in no way to suggest that *Marie* here or other respondents elsewhere resort to anything less than the 'truth' in their talk. At least, no more than the interviewer frequently does in the playing out of his institutional power and in the interaction between a male professional here and a considerably younger, patently less experienced (in the domain of education, at least) and female member of an institutionally 'subordinate' category. To pause may be to lie, but it certainly is employed to gain time or signal resistance in such interactional contexts.

96	M:→19	°eine gute Frage°°	°a good question°°
97	(5.0)		
98	M:	mhmm:: (5.0) ich denke dass man	mhmm:: (5.0) I think that you
99		dass man selber waechst wenn man	that you yourself grow when
100	→20	dann zwei drei Jahre dabei ist u:nd	you've been here 2 or 3 years
101		gesehen hat wie es ablaeuft der	a:nd you've seen how things
102		ganze Apparat uhmm: (2.0) und	work the whole system uhmm:
103	→21	aufgrund von eigenen Erfahrungen	(2.0) and on the basis of
104		die man wahrscheinlich in Klausuren	experience that you probably
105		gemacht habe uhmm wo ich denn wo	got in exams uhmm where I
106		ich denn den eigenen Weg gegangen	where I had gone my own way
107		bin und die Anderen eben <u>nicht</u> uhmm	and the others <u>hadn't</u> uhmm and
108		und ich hatte damit Erfolg dass ich	I was successful doing that I
109	→22	gesagt habe <ESp>oh Mensch das war	said <ESp>hey that was much
110		viel <u>besser</u> :	<u>better</u> :
111	(2.0)		
112	R:	mhmm	Mhmm
113	(1.0)		
114	M:	es ist denke ein Lernprozess ganz	it's I think just a learning
115		einfach	process
116	(1.0)		
117	R:→23	ein Lernprozess den <u>jeder</u> ?	a learning process that <u>anyone</u>
118		durchmachen kann?	can experience?
119	(5.0)		
120	M:→24	koennte schon ja	could be yeah
121	R:→25	koennte schon heheh (1.0) u:nd nach	could be heheh (1.0) a:nd in
122		eigener Beobachtung (.) <u>machen</u> ?	your own experience (.) does
123		alle das diesen Lernprozess durch?	everyone <u>do</u> it? go through
			this learning process?
124	(2.0)		
125	R:	zum Beispiel unter den Freunden und	for example your friends and
126		Freundinnen_ =	girl friend_ =s
127	M:→26	=das ueberlege grade heh (3.0) ich	=I'm just thinking about that
128		glaube wenn man am Ende <u>muss</u> ja	heh (3.0) I think in the end
129		(1.0) weil jeder geht jetzt am Ende	it <u>must</u> yeah (1.0) because
			everyone in the end goes

One further example of asymmetry in learning discourse will be looked at here. We saw above in Extract 4.7 how *Marie* resisted an inadequate interpretation of her

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initial experience of the university environment proposed by the interviewer and re-proposed a student-oriented alternative. I shall re-examine the same extract again, with the aim this time of drawing out the discoursal achievement of *Marie's* responses.

**MARIE: 'I DON'T REMEMBER WHAT I IMAGINED'**

Categories: Elliptical questions/ generalisation/ epistemic/ 'projectables'

**Extract 4. 11**

1	R:	und ich weiss nicht bevor man an	R: and I don't know before you
2		die Uni kommt wie stellt man es	come to the uni how do people
3		sich die Uni vor (.) oder ist es	imagine the uni to be (.) or is
4		schon bekannt? (.) was da	it already a known fact? (.)
5		ablaeuft?	what goes off there?
6	(10.0)		
7	M:	*ich weiss nicht mehr {was ich	M: *I don't know anymore {what I
8		vorgestellt habe**	thought**
9	R:	ne? gar nicht?} war es ein	R: no? not at all?} was it an
10		Abenteuer? (1.0) war es	adventure? (1.0) was it
11		aufregend?	exciting?
12	(2.0)		
13	M:	teils (.) ja: es war:: (3.0) es	M: partly (.) ye::ah it wa::s
14		war natuerlich ein hh Abenteuer	(3.0) it was of course a hh
15		hehe .hhh aber ich hatte das	adventure hehe .hh but I was
16		grosse Glueck? (.) ich hatte am	really lucky? (.) on the first
17		ersten Tag wenn ich= es gab ja	day when I I had=there was these
18		diese Orientierungs(gruppen	orientation-groups

Introducing a theory-generating question of a highly generalised nature, *RE* prefaces the question itself with a concessive construction ('*ich weiss nicht*'/'I don't know') of knowledge alignment, suggesting that *Marie* is in a position to provide knowledge he does not possess. The question itself is posed in a de-personalised form ('*man*'/'people' instead of directly to *Marie*). The close of the question is downgraded ('*was da ablaeuft*'/'what goes off') to protect *Marie's* face presumably because it is felt that this question may prove challenging. A line of questioning might be suggested that presumes that students should be prepared for their studies, in the best of all possible and responsible worlds. Should they not be prepared and informed, that would be taken to be dispreferred and therefore is mitigated.

The extremely long pause of 10 seconds is followed by a half-refusal to participate, in that *Marie* speaks unduly quietly, as if to herself, and deflects the question. The overlap (line 9) is a clear case of overt knowledge-downgrading. The "No?" is suggestive of refusal to credit *Marie's* professed loss of recollection and the choice of terms for the initial university experience like "adventure" and "exciting" are

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reluctantly taken up by *Marie*. Her resistance can be measured by the pauses, first 2 seconds, then after a halting start at line 13 broken by drawn out locution of her ostensible gesture of taking-up the topic ('ja: es war::/'ye::ah it wa::s') followed by another pause of 3 seconds, and is managed by reversion to stiff laughter over the accepted topic definition (lines 14-15). *Marie* has taken up the idea of adventure, clearly reluctantly, yet avoids here open rejection and leads the talk into an own definition of the adventure/exciting candidate theory: she begins by proposing the idea of '*das grosse Glueck*'/'really good luck', which can be read as a shift to more passive reception of the university experience. Instead of experience as an adventure, which however facile, presupposes some kind of agency, self-determination and choice, *Marie* is the recipient of luck.

Yet the most significant turn is yet to come, for after a briefest pause and continuing on into a further elaboration of the 'luck' account, which seems on its way to being unfolded into a narrative of sorts ('*ich hatte am ersten Tag wenn ich=*'/'on the first day when I I had') possessing as it does strong indexicality (*ich, Tag, ich*), temporal definition (*ersten Tag*) and the beginnings of complexity (*wenn ich*) in a subordinate clause, *Marie* enacts a sudden self-repair and introduces the entirely new and institutionally discursive category of the '*Orientierungsgruppen*'/'orientation groups' and so shifts the knowledge alignment into a shared zone in which she overtly seeks to establish a sequential tag to the opening question of the interviewer. For as Schiffrin remarks, "Self-initiation and completion of repair show speakers' sensitivity to their own production of discourse" (Schiffrin, 1999: 278). Further, *Marie* is enacting in this extract a "fishing device", in that she is checking whether her candidate explanation is known or acceptable to her co-participant (Peräkylä, 1995: 134). A similar concept is employed by Sacks when he talks of 'monitoring' conversation. The giving of an answer to a question, he argues, citing a question such as "How are you?" (and, by extension, I argue, to other evaluation-invitations) is possibly divided into two different steps: firstly, "monitoring" (choosing a subset, positive or negative) and "selecting a term" or the proposed candidate answer (Sacks, 1975/1999: 258). What is being monitored is what is warranted and acceptable, and need not be accounted for. The difficulty of "being wrong", particularly in

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asymmetrical interaction, looms large. For the student, too much is at stake, especially in the zone of shared or other knowledge claims.

Thus the management at a local level of *face* is important in the interaction contained in this corpus. It is usually necessary to extricate oneself from talk about potentially delicate or difficult circumstances (e.g. frustrations or worry at the future at the university or in work) in a constructive way. In the extract above, *Marie* did precisely this. After initial difficulties with the projected topic, before extricating herself from a face-threatening situation, she attempted to align herself to the interviewer's topic. Her attempt, essentially, was aimed at re-establishing uncontested 'normality'. Her self-repair moved the discourse from other-oriented to self-oriented and potentially to a shared discourse.

While it might be acceptable in a very broad sense to leave broached and unfinished 'problems' in an 'unmanageable' state, in the long term it is unlikely that the interviewer will get the type of cooperation s/he is seeking to probe further, if they are felt to be riding roughshod over someone's past present and future discourses. This is the most plausible explanation for the hedging and mitigation remarked in Extract 4.11 above.

Avoiding the unmanageable falls under the heading of "preference organization" (see Silverman, 1997: 135ff and Wood and Kroger, 2000: 201-202). The importance of this CA concept is that it assists in:

- pinpointing the way in which students respond to the institutional discourse of the interviewer
- checking the interactional accomplishment of the talk
- attending to interviewer reflexivity
- focussing on the topics that are managed as dispreferred (or "problematic")
- establishing whether, and to what extent, should it be the case, the interview co-participants seek some common ground, i.e. a shared discourse and the significance of that.



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In Extract 4.12 below, interviewer and respondent negotiate a shared meaning regarding the impulse *Marie* received to go abroad and study. *Marie* continues here with the narration of her 'Spain' story, and constructs the scenario of her final application for a place abroad with the help of significant others' voices (indicated throughout by ➔). The richness of the scene-setting allows *Marie* to re-play this crucial moment of her learning biography while simultaneously hedging her account with concessive language. She was '*geschuppst*'/'pushed' (line 9), - though a more exact rendering would give us 'jogged' – into applying, 'almost' in the literal sense, and she frames the narrative with laughter, a pause and in-breaths at the outset which may be there to fend off too close questioning. The interviewer's suggestion, however, that she was forced or 'pressured' into making a decision to study abroad is evidently dispreferred and heard as critique. *Marie* here (lines 19 and 21) hedges a disagreement and then asserts the 'correct' reading of her experience, namely that it was not pressure she received from her peers to act decisively but rather solidarity and support to aid her in taking a step which – she seems to be suggesting – she was ready to take already. In support of this hearing of her words I would draw attention to the skilful narrative framing of her decision within a logical-temporal process: lines 4-6 set up the almost inevitability of the drift abroad. Heavily indexical language (historical past tenses, place names, 'site' detail, her first person role in the narrative) establishes the context and pushes the story ahead.

The interviewer acquiesces to her alternative reading of the experience and continues his questioning in her sense (line 22).

**MARIE: SUPPORT, NOT PRESSURE**

**Extract 4. 12**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1 M: hehh hh und uhm *jetzt auch zum<br>2 Thema Auslandsaufenthalt das kam<br>3 auch glaube ich dadurch** ja umhm<br>4 .hh uhm die Leute fingen an zu<br>5 gehen aus <u>diesem</u> ? <u>Freundeskreis</u> ?<br>6 umhm nach Frankreich nach China<br>7 (.) und ich war so ein bisschen der<br>8 Nachzügler aber die haben mich<br>9 schon <u>geschuppst</u> (1.0) fast im<br>10 wahrsten Sinne des Wortes also mit<br>11 meinen Bewerbungsunterlagen (zur<br>12 ➔ ISMA Stand) <ESp>was willst du<br>13 eigentlich wirklich? un:d und eine<br>14 ➔ Freundin die dabei war <ESp>du<br>15 gibst die jetzt hier ab? | hehh hh and uhm *now to the<br>question of study abroad<br>that came about through** yeah<br>uhm .hh uhm people began going<br>from my circle? of friends? umhm<br>to France to China (.) and I<br>was a bit of a late developer<br>but they sort of pushed me (1.0)<br>almost in the literal sense of<br>the word so we went to the<br>(ISMA) stand with my application<br>documents <ESp>what do you<br>really want? an:d and a girl<br>friend who was there with me<br><ESp>you hand them in here right |
|--|--|

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16	hehehehhhhh .hh (2.0) .hhh	now? hehehehhhhh .hh (2.0) .hhh
17	R: ja also ok so eine (.) gemeinsame	yeah ok so a (.) shared (.)
18	(.) Druck {uhm	pressure {uhm
19	M: nee} Druck wars {nich	noo} pressure no it was{n't
20	R: nee aber}	no but}
21	M: eine Unterstuetzung	a support
22	R: <u>Unterstuetzung</u> aber wie und dann	<u>support</u> but how and then this
23	diese Unterstuetzung kam vo:n	support cam e fro:m girl friends
24	Freundinnen oder Freunden (.) kam	or male friends (.) did it also
25	die auch von von der Uni?	come from from the Uni?

The institutional discourse of the interviewer may also broach unmanageable topics by requiring a respondent to 'know' something. In this case, as we can hear in Extract 4.13 below, the student is assumed to be able to account for a phenomenon belonging by rights to her study experience and which in the turn immediately before the opening of the extract she has herself mentioned: namely the seeming lack of aid from teaching staff for students in need of advice and coaching in their study choices. The sequential implication of the student's meaning is thus established by the questioner and a 'shared' – though directed – discourse is proposed. That this topic-setting move of the interviewer may be resisted and certainly may be dispreferred is clearly marked by his self-repair and hedging while posing his question ('*Lehrende Lehrende*'/'teaching staff teaching staff' and his reformulation of the initial question at line 2). In fact, there is no uptake at all over an extended space of time and the interviewer is forced to re-propose his question more tentatively and less provocatively, using the formula this time of a closed question instead of the original request to respond by theorizing. Ultimately, *Marie's* resistance to the questioner-oriented knowledge claim forces the discourse to be turned to *Marie* herself. Instead of analysing the university context with the aid of institutional categories (student/staff descriptions, course requirements and contact time, for example, might have figured here, as in fact they do elsewhere) she is asked to draw on her personal resources of contextual knowledge. In this way, the interviewer's attention to his reflexivity in posing topics and his change of tack in attending more closely to *Marie's* immediate relationship to the phenomenon – that is, returning to the importance of her individual epistemic narrative potential – represents a significant instance of interviewer self-repair which enacts a local repair to the direction of his discourse, too. As such, this turn-sequence illustrates the CA orientation to theory which is relevant to the respondents engaged in the local interaction work.

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**MARIE: 'HOW SHOULD I ANSWER THAT?'**

Categories: Resistance/eliptical questioning/requests to theorize

**Extract 4. 13**

1	R:	zum Beispiel Lehrende	for example teaching staff
2		Lehrende} ja weiss nicht wie	teaching staff} yeah I don't
3		erkläert man sich das? <u>wieso</u>	know how do you explain that?
4		dass so wenig <u>Hilfe</u> kommt	<u>why is it</u> that so little <u>help</u>
5			<u>is given?</u>
6	(3.0)		
7	R:	hat es keinen Platz? "dort an	is there no room for it? "there
8		der Uni"" (.) hat es einen	at the uni"" (.) does it have a
9		Platz	place there
10	(10.0)		
11	M:	es hat anscheinend keinen	it doesn't seem to have any
12		Platz	place there
13	(2.0)		
14	R:	das ist eine Feststellung?	that's a statement?
15	(2.0)		
16	R:	klingt wie eine Feststellung	sounds like a statement
17	(4.0)		
18	M:	ich weiss es nicht	I don't know
19	R:	okay dann die andere Frage	ok then the other question is
20		ist w- (1.0) es war es an der	w- (1.0) it was it at the uni
21		Uni wie wie es sein sollte	how how it should have been (?)
22		(?)	
23	(5.0)		
24	M:→1	wie es sein sollte so:	how it should have been so:
25		entsprechend meinen	like I imagined it to be? or
26		Vorstellungen? oder wie es	how it should be uhm how it
27		sein sollte uhm wie es	would be best? uhm
28		optimal? uhm waere	
29	R:	ist da ein Unterschied?	is there a difference?
30	M:	.hh (.) uh:mm uh? ja?	.hh (.) uh:mm uh? ja?
31	R:	okayhh hehe	okayhh hehe
32	M:	klahrrhh {hehehehehe	obviouslyhh {hehehehehe
33	R:	hehe also je nach dem}	hehe yeah whatever}
34	M:→2	uh:mm (5.0) "wie antworte	uh:mm (5.0) "what am I supposed
35		ich darauf"" es kommt darauf	to answer"" it depends on how
36		an aus welchem Blickwinkel	you look at it (3.0)
37		man das sieht (3.0)	

The question of aid from teaching staff which is patently in short supply for students is a difficult subject. *Marie* declines to take up *RE*'s interpretation of her ambiguous response at lines 11-12 in which she aligns herself initially to the interviewer's candidate inference. She parries the attempts to 'nail her down' ('that's a statement?' / 'sounds like a statement' - lines 14 and 16) by refusing the floor *RE* is attempting to hand over to her, and halts *RE*'s attempt to direct this topic with her refusal at this point to theorize ('*ich weiss es nicht*'/'I don't know' - line 18). In fact, this extract provides us with two valuable instances of *Marie*'s resistance to interviewer-driven discourse and her discursual work in proposing her own emerging discourse. At line

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24 (→1) *Marie* initiates a challenge to *RE* to re-define his terms. Might she not here be challenging her institutional opposite to 'put his cards on the table', in other words, to disclose the theoretical (i.e. epistemic) implicature of his hypothetical questions? The lengthy pause of 5 seconds before *Marie* launches this challenge may be evidence of the potential price such a direct challenge can have and of her attention to possible face-threatening results. At all events, *Marie* here is declining to co-construct this emerging topic ('how should the university have been?') and can be heard here to employ a pick-up question as an understanding control device, forcing the exchange in her terms. Effectively, she refuses *RE*'s first-position elicitation attempt and assumes first-position herself.

The difficulties for both *Marie* and *RE* can be read off the laughter and hedging from line 30-33. The difficulties are co-managed and the co-participants here disengage from the stand-off threatened by *RE*'s essentially coercive use of topic-provision at the outset. The allocation of knowledge rights is downgraded (line 33: '*hehe also je nach dem*' / '*hehe yeah whatever*') and *Marie* is left with the floor, though not directly forced to orientate to the immediately prior turn. The sequential implicature of the longer turn, however, is still in force and at line 34 (→2) *Marie* ultimately 'succumbs' to the interviewer's determination of the topic (see the 5 second pause before she resumes her turn) and begins to develop her response, which I take to be illustrative of the manner in which learning discourse emerges in dyadic talk of this kind.

The line of argument pursued here by *RE* is continued over into the next extract.

*MARIE: LOOKING BEYOND THE IMMEDIATE*

**Extract 4. 14**

1	M:	uh::mm (5.0) °wie antworte ich	uh:mm (5.0) °how should I
2		darauf°° es kommt darauf an	answer that°° it depends on
3	→man	aus welchem Blickwinkel man	what way you look at it
4	→MP	das sieht (3.0) also es ist	(3.0) anyway it is
5	→MP	mit Sicherheit <u>nicht</u> wie es so	definitely <u>not</u> like it
6	→man →MP	sein <u>sollte</u> (.) aber man kann	<u>should be</u> (.) but a lot can
7	→man →MP	eine Menge daraus machen aber	be done with it but you'd
8	→ED	das muss man auch vom Anfang	have to make it your aim
9		an:: glaube ich verinnerlichen	right from the beginning::
			I think
10		(.)	
11	R:→P1	kann man das?	is that possible?
12		(4.5)	

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13	→ED	M:	uhm ich denke es gibt	uhm I reckon there are
14	→He	→MP	vielleicht? vielleicht	perhaps? perhaps students
15			Studenten die das koennen?	who can do that? but they
16		→MP	aber die die muessen in ihrer	they must be pretty
17	→Pro		Persoenlichkeit ziemlich <u>weit</u>	<u>together</u> in their
18		→MP	sein uh::m (3.0) ((tongue	personality uh::m (3.0)
19	→He	→MP	click)) die einfach ein	((tongue click)) they
20			anderes Ziel haben	simply have a different aim
21	→SR	→MP	wahrscheinlich a::ls a::ls in	probably tha:n tha:n to
22			Regelstudienzeit durchzukommen	finish in the standard time
23			und einen guten Abschluss zu	and get a good degree
24			machen	
25		R:→P1	{also	{so
26	→He	M:	sie} muessen vielleicht mehr	they} perhaps have to place
27	→man		Wert darauf legen dass man ein	more importance in looking
28	→He		bisschen ueber den Tellerrand	a bit beyond the immediate
29	→He	→MP	schau:t un::d sich vielleicht	things a::nd perhaps they
30		→MP	doch mal den den Luxus goennt	allow themselves just once
31	→SR		drei Semestern uhm "drei	the luxury to spend 3
32	→SR	→MP	Monate in den Ferien" mal	semesters uhm three months
33		→MP	woanders hingehen oder sich	during the holidays
34	→man		mal ein Semester frei nimmt	somewhere else or they take
35	→Pro	→MP	dass man .hhh ((tongue click))	a semester off sometime so
36			vielleicht doch Faecher	that you .hhh ((tongue
37	→SR	→MP	kombiniert die ein bisschen	click)) perhaps combine
38	→man	→MP	ungewoehnlich sind jetzt nicht	other subjects which are a
39	→SR	→MP	unbedingt wenn man	bit unusual not necessarily
40			Fremdspra:chen uh:mm	when you do foreign
41		→MP	vielleicht koennte man ein ein	languages uh:m perhaps you
42		→MP	Nebenfach was Technisches	could do a subsidiary
43	→He	→MP	machen wenn einem das	subject something technical
44			vielleicht mehr interessiert	if that was more
45			oder	interesting or (2.0)
46			(2.0)	
47		R:→P1	gibt es gibt es solche	are there are there
48			Studierende?	students like that?
49			(1.0)	
50		M:	ich kenne keine	I don't know any
51		R:→P1	Keinen hhehh=	none hhehh=
52		M:→MP	=GIBT es sicher? aber ich	=course there ARE? but I
53			kenne {keine	don't know {any

In the final extract of this section, we hear *Marie* responding to interviewer pressure to theorize aloud about a better university learning environment, how things could or should be, and her resistance to the sceptical line of argument she patently hears in the questions put to her. In fact, she develops a possibilist argument of defence of the institution university as well as the potential of the individual student to make more of studying than just getting through on time.

This extract will serve also to attempt a preliminary summary of the work achieved in the interview. To follow the progress of *Marie's* open theorizing as it emerges, additional analytical data are provided alongside the relevant line numbers of the extract. Beginning with the left-hand column, details of emergent

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theorizing/generalization are indicated by the use of →'man' ('you'/'one'/'people'). Marie's response to RE's elicitation of an explanation for the value of studying is developed in her first turn (lines 1-9). Initial reluctance gives way to a careful attempt at generalization. The neutral pronoun 'man' is put to work here and it seems plausible to infer that the student respondent is proposing a candidate shared discourse, aiming her general remarks at the presumed agenda of the interviewer. If we include now the additional data in the second column, the simultaneous packed use of modal particles and verbs (→MP) ('mit Sicherheit nicht'/'definitely not'; 'sein sollte'/'should be'; 'kann', 'muss'/'can', 'must') seems to suggest that Marie is indeed here orienting pointedly to the interviewer's agenda, emphasizing with the employment of modal particles the seriousness of the topic and of her attempt to deal with it satisfactorily. The packed use of MPs, then, performs the task of face-saving and warrants the interviewer's prerogative to request responses from Marie.

Marie's turn here shows evidence of more than mere acceptance of the topic provided by RE on his terms, however. For another central feature of this extract is the evidence of asymmetrical discourse and epistemic talk it contains. The asymmetry implicit in the longer sequence we have been following here – which is continued over the next turns (see the 'first-position' elicitation '→P1' exercised exclusively by the interviewer at lines 11, 25, 47 and 51 which force the exchange) – is hearable, as we have seen, in Marie's orientation to the interviewer-topic ('the ideal university'). But Marie's resistance and counter-production of an own candidate discourse of 'the university' is a fundamental feature of the asymmetrical talk in this, as in other, extracts. The requirement to theorize leads Marie, in fact, to produce *in situ* her own discursal theory of learning and university study. Thus, the asymmetrical talk itself is the local context of discourse production. This is hearable at lines 8-9 where Marie allows her own theorizing to emerge from the proposed shared discourse that she offered immediately before. The code-tag →ED ('Epistemic Discourse') at line 8 records the utterance of Marie's candidate theory. Again, at line 13 (→ED) Marie can be heard to stake her own knowledge claim in support of her further open theorizing. The development of Marie's discourse here is exemplary for many such moments of institutional interaction. The generalizations Marie makes, for all their superficial blandness, can be seen to be heavy with self-

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repair, hedging devices and dense webs of modality (given as →SR, →He, →MP). A further notable feature of *Marie's* open theorizing here is the deployment of prosodic devices over and above the use of pauses, inbreaths, quiet speech (given as talk between the symbols ° and °°) and emphasis. At lines 17 and 35 we hear *Marie* clicking her tongue in her cheek (→Pro). The hedging and modality devices we can hear seem to warrant the view that *Marie* is establishing an own discourse under potentially face-threatening conditions. In fact, we hear her combining declarative speech with strongly concessive hedges (e.g. 'einfach' 'simply'/'wahrscheinlich' 'probably'/'muessen vielleicht' 'have to perhaps') woven into her talk in an intricate effort of self-justification and caution in the positions she takes up. Notwithstanding the risk inherent in openly generating theory and discourse, it seems justifiable to hear *Marie* in this extract as coming very close to proposing her own emerging learning discourse – borne out by her own learning biography which she has already established before this exchange (e.g. Extract 4.6 'SPAIN') – as *the template* for the learning experience the interviewer has expressed an interest in. With all due caution and a maze of hedging devices, *Marie* suggests that maturer students, who 'simply' have broader targets than most of their fellow students (13-24) and who perhaps look 'a bit' beyond the immediate and 'perhaps' interrupt their studies for three semesters/three months/in their holidays/one semester and study less usual subjects or subject combinations (26-45) are perhaps those who come closest to using the university more fully for their self-development. Pressed by the interviewer's unrelenting first position questioning (line 47), *Marie* 'back-pedals' and claims not to know any such student. Pressed again by something suggestive of amused disbelief (line 51 →P1), *Marie* takes up the turn at a run to deliver a defiant self-contradiction ('GIBT es sicher? aber ich kenne {keine}'/'there ARE but I don't know any' - lines 52-53). This extract, and the discursal work *Marie* enacts here, must, I feel, be read as unfolding within the larger context – the 'long sequence' – of the interview, embedded in turn within the much larger context of *Marie's* interaction with this researcher over time and with the institution 'university' as it has affected her prior to the date of the interview. *Marie* is *herself*, according to her own account of her learning biography, evolved over years and produced in the specific form the research interview promotes, just such a representative of a 'maturer' approach to

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learning and study. For, Marie's biographical narratives – the characteristics of which are examined in greater detail in the next chapter – develop precisely the learning discourse she unfolds here: she sees herself in fact as having 'looked beyond the immediate things' (which, again, might more exactly be translated as 'looking over the edge of the plate') when she resolved to go abroad, and she develops the theme of her personal growth – hedged and qualified – over many turns of talk. *Marie's* prosodic work, carefully negotiating difficult themes indeed, seems to punctuate her accomplishment of a discourse of self. If she shies away here from a *clearer* discourse, and the tongue clicks seem to mark the crucial point of her talk on both occasions, it may be because the category of 'maturer' student of which she would likely enough wish to be reckoned a member, remains a matter of 'theory'. She makes no claim here to know, or know of, significant others who might prove her point. The absence in this extract of any form of embedded speech is potentially also of interest. For, as we have seen above, the talk of significant others – particularly members of categories whose discourse may serve to 'ground' *Marie's* accounts of theory or self – is a frequent device respondents turn to in asymmetrical talk. As will be recalled, I choose to call this use of embedded speech a 'plausibility device', as it serves, among other things, to shore up own discourse practices. The absence of the plausibility device here is, of course, *proof* of nothing. *Marie* employs in her open theorizing here, as I have shown, a cautious system of hedging checks and balances and still succeeds in establishing a strong discursual position at line 52. The deployment of embedded speech elements, however, would conceivably have relieved her of much of the burden involved in shoring up her generalizations. Its absence, by default, makes itself heard. This desirable membership category, her hedging seems to suggest, lacks the substance to count in the fullest sense as a counter-theory to the interviewer-agenda.

## Summary

In this chapter I have attempted to show that the talk in interaction within the research interview model employed here is able to generate significant evidence of asymmetrical talk and responses to it. By attending to the close detail of the conversation-like interaction of the interview, such as the function of turns,



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sequencing, question-types and responses to them, the construction of discourses, in particular discourses of learning, could be shown as it unfolds in context. The extracts demonstrate that, while the search for common discourses continually shows itself in the hedges and changing orientations of the co-respondents, and while this co-construction of common, shared discourse normally tends to favour the dominant discourse of the institutional context and its representative (i.e. the interviewer here), the student is heard to have significant possibilities and resources with which she can oppose, reject and ignore the interviewer's discourses and that by so doing, she is able to enact her own discourses, which constitute and are constituted by her learning biography.

A significant element of the development within the talk of student discourses of learning is that they are embedded in interdiscursive sequences which can be described as 'micro-narratives'. These discrete narrative units – themselves embedded within longer sequences of narration or suspended within brief turn-exchanges – act as interactive 'wooden horses' which transport student *sub rosa* discourses (Sola and Bennett, 1985) into the stream of discourse upheld by the institutional context. An excellent example is Extract 4.12 above.

Much of the evidence of 'own' discourse practice in interaction that we have seen so far, which reveals itself invariably as more or less serious rejection/opposition to dominant academic-institutional discourse, is generated in the 'open theorizing' associated with the deployment of the speech or thoughts of significant others. This turn to interdiscursivity is perhaps the single most significant characteristic of student talk in the research interview. As we have seen already on numerous occasions, the turn to the embedded speech of self or others *creates the possibility of own discourse production* and, in addition, *cements that discourse to a robust learning biography*. These heteroglossic elements of the biographized narrative enhance the tellability of the narratives exchanged in the interaction and 'ground' the student's talk in her 'own' contexts of doing being a student which are independent of, and therefore relatively resistant to, the institutional context of the interview encounter.

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A final point of note at this juncture is that the interview exchanges generate significant ethnographic data concerning the study experience of the small student population examined here.

In the next chapter attention will be turned to the narratives and biographical structuredness of students' discourse.

## Chapter 5: Constructing Learning Biographies (The Corpus 1)

In taking a closer look at the biographic narrative work developed by students in their talk, the following aspects play a central role in the analytical approach adopted here:

- evidence of identity construction through 'biographization', including the building of an academic identity as part of a life-story;
- the workings of interdiscursivity as evidence of the employment and deployment of discourses of learning;
- the evidence of knowledge claims and knowledge acquisition

The learning biography – which I show to be a significant aspect of student talk in interaction – is founded on 'temporal sequentiality'. This means that a biographical context is constructed interactively which provides the open theorizing of the student with a grounded structure, characterised by its references to temporal and ideational stages in each student's educational 'course'. Narrative, created in the talk, itself creates a context and grounding for the discontinuous talk that continues to work on the explication and theorizing the student respondent performs.

It will be useful at this stage to define more closely the type of talk that will be examined here and presented in analysis as narrative. I make certain differentiations regarding the positions adopted on this topic elsewhere. Thus, I make no specific distinction, for example, between the "chronicle" and the narrative as such, as Linde does (1993). In my corpus, the expressions narrative, account, story are used interchangeably. They all have the following basic characteristics:

- they represent longer turns, stretching usually over a number of turns
- they are sequentially warranted by the previous talk and usually serve to ground open theorizing
- they represent a holding of the floor over a number of turns during which time the floor is accepted
- the talk is recipient-oriented and it is warrantably tellable
- it is sequentially generated by a request to perform it

Further, there is the question of structuredness. The types of structures established since the work of Labov (1972, 1999) include a range of the following:

- the 'abstract' – which usually presents an initial summary of the whole story (Labov, 1999: 227)
- the 'orientation' – in which time, place, persons, and their activity in the narrative may be identified. However, although the orientation-phase may be organised fairly compactly at the start of the narrative, individual elements of the orientation (e.g. indexical features) may be found placed at "strategic points later on" (Labov, 1999: 229)
- 'complication' – in which the events unfolding in the narrative are positioned strategically
- 'evaluation' – this Labov describes as "the means used by the narrator to indicate the point of the narrative" (1999: 231). Clearly this is connected very closely to the general 'reportability' or 'tellability' (Sacks, 1992, II: 12) of the narrative, and may be connected interactively with challenges and repair (Labov, 1999: 231).
- 'result' or 'resolution' – answering the question "how did it end?"

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- the 'coda' - to signal the finish of a narrative, the coda can be used. Codas may have the "property of bridging the gap between the moment of time at the end of the narrative proper and the present" (Labov, 1999: 230). It is therefore of enormous importance as a marker of transition between discursual contexts which emerge and merge during talk. Labov also points out how the coda may be used strategically within contested talk as a "disjunctive" device. In this function – one of many examples is to be found in the next Extract (5.1 below) indicated as ➔9 – the coda closes the sequence of complicating actions in the narrative, and as such makes further questioning about the sequence of events redundant or impossible. Further questions are forestalled, and the narrative (and the narrative-oriented discourse) is closed off (Labov, 1999: 230).

Alheit makes use of a similar structure in his approach to educational biographies (Alheit, 1989). He uses the 'preamble' in the place of the abstract, and characterises the intermediate sections of a skilfully related biographical narrative - the 'complication' and 'evaluative' sections in Labov's terms - as being heavily indexicalized with time sequences, explanations, definitions, to show it is a narrative and not an argumentative structure (Alheit, 1989: 128). An emphasis on the structuring of biographical knowledge ("*Strukturbildung biographischen Wissens*" – Alheit, 1989: 124) is perhaps the most interesting feature of this branch of German life history and biographical research. Following Alheit here, we can further distinguish between the layers present and working through the learning biographies my student respondents produce: thus over and above the autobiographical content of narrated experience, elements of 'tradition-building', i.e. the elaboration of 'set-pieces' or established narrative frames which are of strategic value in establishing membership and identity, can be found, and more diffuse still, the collection and employment of a common-sense reserve of 'higher level knowledge' ("*höherprädikatives Wissens*"), of "everyday 'theories' and judgements relevant to the 'life-world'" of the individual ("*alltags- und lebensweltrelevanten Theorien*" und *Einschätzungen*") which influence behaviour when they are 'institutionalised' and become coded in the canon of possible narrative structures presenting and offering themselves in a given collective context (Alheit, 1989: 139).

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In the deployment of these different levels of knowledge and experience in the learning biography, respondents commonly make use of further complicating structures. Labov's 'complication', 'evaluation', 'resolution' are paralleled in biography research by 'background development' (*'Hintergrundkonstruktion'*), 'distancing', and rhetorical methods of narration to highlight the 'professionalism' (i.e. authority) of the narrative content (Alheit, 1989: 128-134). Similar analytical divisions in the narrative 'template' of life story research are 'description', 'narration' and 'argumentation' (Miller, 2000: 134).

### ***Discontinuity of narratives***

The narratives produced by my student respondents regularly reproduced elements of this structure, but not always. In fact, the narratives are characterised by discontinuity. This is occasioned by the nature of the interaction in my interviews. Jefferson and Lee call this (in relation to 'troubles talk' and 'advice giving') 'asynchrony' and 'contamination', which is heard when the recipient is not, or not equally, aligned to the direction the talk is overtly designed to go in (Jefferson and Lee, 1992). In fact, talk in interaction is rarely, if ever, entirely unambiguous concerning what at any moment is occurring. A narrative may become a statement, the recipient's non-alignment to a description may likely bring about a new alignment, and so on.

Hoerning also stresses the incompleteness of individual biographies: biographic experiences, she points out, are "bound up at all times to a specific context"<sup>34</sup> and that new experience is worked and reworked into the former life story: "Biographic experiences and the biographic knowledge that arises from them are in this view not merely the laying down of a stratum of things experienced but also the continuous re-working of all that is experienced"<sup>35</sup> (Hoerning, 1989: 153-154).

The learning biographies of my student respondents were not elicited as (extensive) life histories. The interview format is not a near-monologue, as Miller expects

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<sup>34</sup> ["Biographische Erfahrungen sind lebensgeschichtlich an einen Kontext gebunden".]

<sup>35</sup> ["Biographische Erfahrungen und das daraus entstandene biographische Wissen ist nach dieser Vorstellung also nicht nur die Ablagerung des Erfahrenen, sondern die fortlaufende Überarbeitung des Erfahrenen ..."]

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interviews employed in the collection of detailed life-histories to be, or only rarely (Miller, 2000: 92).

Thus, the biographies narrated across the encounter are discontinuous speech texts with all the signs of being, not elicited biographies, but biographized talk, temporally sequential and interdiscursively constructed learning biographies.

### ***'Autobiographical reflexion' and identity: Students' learning-biographies and sense of self-development***

#### **Life-story work**

Central elements in the life story are connectedness, aim and some kind of climax. The use of 'staging' devices (direct and indirect speech, mimesis, caricature, affective marking of lexis and special discourse particles) in the unfolding of the directed narrative is discussed by Susanne Günthner in particular connection with the creation of bonds of solidarity between conversation participants (Günthner, 1997: 189-90). While their significance for an analysis of the play of discourses in students' speech will be considered again below, the 'narrative detailing' that Günthner adduces as an important rhetorical element in stimulating others' involvement (1997: 211) is apparent in the dramatic sequencing of numerous coherent life-story narratives in the data. As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, formative experiences in the pre-higher education careers of interview respondents *Marie, Özlem, Carola, Laleh* and *Sara* are examined in the following pages for evidence of the following work carried out in the interview:

- identity construction through 'biographization', including the building of an academic identity as part of a life-story;
- the workings of interdiscursivity in the employment and deployment of discourses of learning;
- modality devices as a bridge between the biographization processes and the knowledge claims in discourse;

The exchange in Extract 5.1 has already been encountered in part in the previous chapter where the focus of interest was the role of institutional lexis (see Extract 4.3)

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and will be commented on here as a constitutive part of the learning biography *Marie* develops in the course of her interview.

This short narrative passage, with the story of *Marie's* personal development as a result of a period of study abroad, contains elements of most of the features of narrative talk set out above. In this, as in all the remaining extracts of this chapter, in the column to the right of the extract line numbers the structuredness of *Marie's* talk is indicated using Labov's terms. Below the heading for the extract, the abbreviations for Labov's structure are given in square brackets. In the next column to the right, significant evidence of the construction of discourses, biographization processes in talk, epistemic discourse and knowledge claims as well as rhetorical-prosodic markers is indicated by numbered arrows (e.g. →5).

**MARIE: NARRATIVE OF SELF DEVELOPMENT**<sup>36</sup>

[Ab = 'abstract', Or = 'orientation', Co = 'complication', Ev = 'evaluation', Re = 'resolution', 'coda']

**Extract 5.1**

1	M:	ja was soll ich sagen was ich an	yeah what should I say what I
2		der Uni gewaehlt habe? hehehe	chose at the uni? hehehe
3	R:	zum Beispiel	for example
4		(0.5)	
5	<b>Ab</b>	M: uhm das ist ja witzig weil heute	uhm that's funny because I
6	<b>Or</b> →1	"denke ich ueber die Sachen ganz	think differently about these
7		anders nach"" seit ich in Spanien	things today since I was in
8	<b>Ev</b> →2	war? hat mir ja irgendwie die	Spain? it sort of opened my
9		Augen geoeffnet	eyes
10	R:	ja wieso?	yeah how?
11	<b>Co</b>	M: =weil: .hh ja: ich ich glaube ich	=because: .hh I I think I used
12	<b>Or</b> →3	war frueher sehr eingeschuechtert	to be pretty scared very shy
13		sehr verschuechtert von dem	because of the education system
14		Bildungssystem uhm=	uhm=
15	R:	schon in der Schule? oder {erst	already when you were at
16		uhm	school? or {only uhm
17	<b>Or</b>	M: in}der Schule ja auch schon uhm	in} school yeah then too uhm
18	<b>Co</b>	und dann und dann ja auch hier an	and then and then here too at
19		der Uni uhm immer diese	the uni uhm always these
20		→5 Anforderungen	demands below average studying
21		unterdurchschnittliche	time above average performance
22		Studienzeit	and if you didnt manage that
23		ueberdurchschnittliche Leistungen	and didnt already speak loads
24	<b>Co</b>	und wenn man das alles nicht	of languages perfectly uhm well
25		hatte und nicht Sprachen schon	I always thought that I was
26		perfekt spra:ch uhm also ich hab	more sort of below averhage
27	<b>Re</b> →6	immer gedacht ich waere mehr so	hehehe

<sup>36</sup> For the extracts which follow in this and the subsequent chapters, the transcription choices made with regard to capitalization (e.g. the use of capitals in the German transcription and the different use of capitals for the English translation), punctuation, etc., are set out in full in Appendix 2.



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28			unter dem Nivhheau hehehe	
29		R:	ja?	yeah?
30	Re	M:	oder ich hatte gar nicht die	or I didn't have the
31			Moeglichkeit einen Super-Job zu	possibility to get a super job
32	Co		bekommen bei den Firmen weil	in companies because (1.0)
33		→7	(1.0) (raps on table top) uhm: die	((raps table top)) uhm: they
34	Re	→8	suchen nur die creme de la creme	are only interested in the
35			(.) und seitdem ich in Spanien	creme de la creme (.) and since
36	coda	→9	war da denke ich <ESp> du kannst	I was in Spain I think <ESp>
37			alles machen was du willst du	you can do anything you want to
38			kriegst doch alles was du willst=	you can get whatever you want=

*Marie* 'abstracts' the narrative she is required to produce at line 5 with the – for her – characteristic hedging mitigation that what she is about to tell is 'witzig'/'funny'. This may plausibly be taken as a predictable precautionary face-saving device. What is later developed as a serious epistemic discourse (→9) is first sketched in as a potentially funny anecdote. As such, it may also be read as an example of that 'staging' of joint discourse mentioned above. Understood in this way, the use of humour and casualness of tone would be an affective marker, a 'defusing' device and a bid for agreement at the start of a turn.

The heavy indexicality (*ich/seit ich/in Spanien war – I/since I/was in Spain*) of the first 'orientation' (lines 6-7) serves, too, to embed a strong claim to knowledge and self-development and is a prime example of biographization. In other words, crucial life events are framed narratively in a structured, sequential fashion to produce a discrete, recognizable biographical narrative, however brief or discontinuous it may be. Further instances of orientation (lines 12 and 17) provide in the same fashion indexical framing and temporal sequencing to the progress of *Marie's* narrative. 'Complicating action' (11, 18, 24, 32) is hearable where the narrative descends into greater contextual detail and sequential complexity, employing adverbs of time (*und dann und dann/and then and then*), conditional clauses (*und wenn man/and if you*) and conjunctions of causality (*weil/because*). The rhetorical-prosodic function of such contextualization is evident here in the self-repair at line 18 as *Marie* hesitates before in fact drawing parallels between negative school experience and experience at the university. Likewise prosodically charged is the complicating action at 33 where the table-rapping (→7), following on from a significant pause suggesting that *Marie* needs a moment to consider the cost to her self-image of continuing her discourse (begun at →5), is bundled together with the final of three 'resolutions' (at

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27, 30, 34) and an important use of a *membership category device* (→8 'crème de la crème'). The coda (36) is fused with an enormously effective piece of 'internal' embedded speech (→9). In effect, the authority of *Marie's* own voice concludes the short narrative and provides the only authoritative interpretation admitted. The contrast here is underlined (a) to the hesitations and insecurities of the contested knowledge claim at →4, 5, 6, (b) to the 'technologized' jargon of the institution at →5, to the negative membership category of the 'elite' she is not part of at →6 and →8.

The work *Marie* is doing here combines in an intricate way the discourse functions of the learning biography. Identity and self are proposed within a biographized framework and discourses of knowledge and learning are accounted for by reference to events in the life world of the student. Further, the student's discourses are contextualized through association with membership categories (the privileged versus those whose eyes have been opened by experience) which themselves are grounded in the significant speech of self and others. Finally, the strength of out-of-frame speech lies in its intensely affective, personalized prosodic and rhetorical features. *Marie's* coda: '*du kannst alles / machen / was du willst / du kriegst doch alles / was du willst*' (you can do anything you want to you can get whatever you want) is an example of the extremely sensitive (co-) selection of words that Sacks refers to in connection with the 'poetics' of talk design. Designing talk for and with the audience, he argues, involves the employment of co-selected "sound sequences" in specific talk environments (Sacks, 1992, II: 321). The selection of individual words partially on the basis of sound co-ordination is a sign of just how locally constructed a piece of talk can be (1992, II: 321). In *Marie's* case, the repetition (4 times '*du*', twice each for '*alles*' and '*willst*') and alliteration (k's and dark a's) and the unchallengeability of the direct speech, show this example of the plausibility device for generating a common sense theory to be custom-made for the interactive environment in which it is used.

The dramatic sequencing of a coherent life-story narrative that we have seen in the case of *Marie* is evident, too, in the formative experiences in the pre-higher

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education careers of Özlem (ÖM in the extracts), Laleh (LT), Sara (SG) and Carola (CO). The first longer extract is taken from the interview with Özlem M.

*Özlem M.*

*Born 1975 in Osnabrück, Germany. Parents Turkish, moved back to Turkey when she was 15. Lived in the family of her brother in Osnabrück till she moved to DU University in 1996.*

*In possession of German nationality.*

*The interview took place in two sites – first, in a vacant teaching room, then in the open air in front of the University Library. Once again, the choice of venue was dictated by want of alternatives and by a desire to find neutral ground which would be least intimidating for both sides. Özlem had expressed interest, but also trepidation before the interview, which she called a 'Befragung', i.e. a survey interview.*

*Özlem was known to me as a calm, hard-working and serious student and I had had the opportunity to recommend her for a grant to study in Australia, which was then mentioned in the course of the interview. There is little doubt that the interview came about as easily as it did for the reason that we were in contact in the days prior to recording it on account of the reference I agreed to write for her. A sense of obligation was obviously a strong motivation for agreeing to do the interview. A second point was that Özlem was employed outside the University part-time in the same building in which I work as a freelance trainer. We had met there briefly for an exchange of documents relevant to the references she needed. Thus, Özlem probably felt obliged to co-operate, and I felt it was a particularly important matter to break down this sense of inequality and institutional dependency.*

*Interestingly, Özlem had tried to organize a pair-interview with a male Turkish student, with whom she had shared a table throughout the seminar she did with me during the previous semester. I would have accepted the proposal (which anyway did not materialize) but found it particularly significant that ethnic bonds should be so openly emphasized. I conducted a separate interview with the said student four months later (Altin). During the second half of the interview, outside the university library (and hindered to some extent by a circling police helicopter), we were joined briefly by another male Turkish student who wished to use ÖM's acquaintance with me to ask me a favour. I later interviewed him, too, a year later (Selim). The interviews with Özlem, Altin and Selim all lent support to an impression I was gaining during the interviews: that there exists a neat division in the student body between 'German' students (who may likely be Italian, Russian or Polish!) and Turkish students (who may likely enough include, too, Arabs and Iranians, though not Asians). The division, according to information provided mainly by Altin, but corroborated by Selim, is along group solidarity lines. There is no hostility to the 'other' group, but frequently little contact and little mutual aid. Özlem,*

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however, did not refer to this topic herself in any way, nor did it arise in her accounts of study methods and student life.

Özlem proved to be a calm, conscientious interviewee, intent on giving thoughtful answers to questions she admitted she had scarcely thought about. She struck me as unusually independent – her lifestyle and youth, growing up in Germany more or less alone, and having chosen German nationality as a teenager – and strikingly self-contained. This last fact was reflected in the interview by a significantly rare employment of others' speech in her talk. As such, she is, amongst the female respondents of my interviews, something of an exception.

We agreed to do a second interview, around the time of her final diploma dissertation (July 2001) to talk about her study methods in the light of the final seminars and exams. We fixed a date for this meeting, but putting the finishing touches to her dissertation cost her more work than she had reckoned with and the time left before she departed for Australia became alarmingly short. We agreed, then, to meet for a second interview when she returns.

Vignette 5. 1

ÖZLEM: INITIAL ACCOUNT

Categories: Account/Learning Biography

Extract 5. 2

- |    |     |                                  |                               |
|----|-----|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1  | ÖM: | ja mein Namen ist Özlem M ich    | yeah my name is Özlem M I uhm |
| 2  |     | uhm "bin" neunzehnhundert        | "was" born in nineteen        |
| 3  |     | fuenfundsiebzig geboren in der   | seventy five near Osnabrueck  |
| 4  |     | Naehe von Osnabrueck (.) hab da  | (.) I went to school there    |
| 5  |     | halt ganz normal die Schule      | just normally did my Abitur   |
| 6  |     | gemacht Abitur gemacht und dann  | and then in nineteen ninety   |
| 7  |     | neunzehnhundertfuenfundneunzig   | five straight after my Abitur |
| 8  |     | sofort nach dem Abitur (.) hier  | (.) I began here in Duisburg  |
| 9  |     | in Duisburg angefangen (.) zu    | (.) my studies (.) without    |
| 10 |     | studieren (.) ohne Ausbildung    | doing training before         |
| 11 |     | vorher                           |                               |
| 12 | R:  | uhuh                             | uhuh                          |
| 14 | ÖM: | und da waehrend des Studiums hab | and during my studies I've    |
| 15 |     | ich mehrere Jobs gemacht (.)     | done various different jobs   |
| 16 | →1  | meistens also (1.0) zwei         | (.) so mainly (1.0) I did 2   |
| 17 |     | Praktikas hab ich gemacht einmal | placements one in taxes (for  |
| 18 |     | im Lohnsteuer (für einen Verein) | a club) and in a little       |
| 19 | →2  | und in so einer kleinen          | business consulting firm but  |
| 20 |     | Wirtschaftsberatungsgesellschaft | everything was more like      |
| 21 |     | aber alles war mehr so eine      | families all family firms     |
| 22 |     | Familien alles Familienbetriebe  | small businesses and after    |
| 23 | →3  | kleine Betriebe und danach hab   | that I uhm worked at the      |
| 24 |     | ich uhm bei der Citibank         | Citibank (.) short time one   |
| 25 | →4  | gearbeitet (.) kurz anderthalb   | and a half years and now at   |
| 26 |     | Jahre und jetzt bei der Dresdner | the Dresdner bank (2.0) and   |
| 27 | →5  | Bank (2.0) und da ich Banken     | seeing as my major is banking |
| 28 |     | Schwerpunkt mache passt es dann  | it fits well (2.0) ((?))      |
| 29 |     | auch (2.0) ((?))                 |                               |

In this first account of her school, training and university history, Özlem can be heard to do basically two things: she attends to the interviewer's request for information

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about herself by delivering a pointedly neutral account-list of her most important moves (1-15), and she then expands – given that the interviewer declines to re-take the floor at line 12 – on the subject of her job experience to date. The first section - the account - is characteristic of many of the interviews in the corpus, if only because at the outset of each interview the overwhelming feeling every respondent has is insecurity, awe perhaps, caution certainly. Not knowing what is expected or 'right', generates the kind of hedging and mitigation of even the simplest items of information. Thus Özlem has '*halt ganz normal die Schule gemacht*'/'went to school just normally' (lines 5-6), that is, she is 'normal'. It is plausible at even this very early stage in the interview to construe this example of category membership as a *negative* knowledge claim and as a tacit challenge to the possible institutional agenda of the interviewer. The account, too, is shot through with characteristic selection of past participles, drumming the events into the list: '*gemacht*'/'done or did' (4, 6, 14) and '*angefangen*'/'began' (9).

The beginnings of a personal profile, or at least of an approach to how Özlem may likely construct her biography in the interview context, can be heard from line 16 onwards. Her account of work experience is massively hedged. She plays down the significance of everything she has so far done, while simultaneously making an extremely important point for her learning biography: she underlines a certain consistency and pragmatism in her choice of learning environments. At →1 she seems about to generalize about her jobs, but enacts a self-repair and commences to itemize her placements. She goes into detail (taxes, business consulting) and yet mitigates the importance of her employment at →2. The fact that she worked for 'a club' or for 'family firms' minimizes the significance of her jobs. She repeats this again at →3. Moving on to an important national bank is also played down at →4, where eighteen months' experience there is reduced to '*kurz*'/'short time' (25). The sense of upwards progress is nevertheless very clear here, and at →5 Özlem caps her account with the meaningful coda that her accumulated experience 'fits well' ('*passt es denn auch*').

Özlem's work in these few moments of talk are directed towards a self-positioning in the interview context which will allow her room to develop her life history on her

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own chosen terms. Her caution here is a foretaste of the type of knowledge claim she will craft for herself and of the biographic self she will later work to justify in talk (see particularly Extracts 7.7-7.10 and 8.1 and 8.2).

Next, we shall turn to another Turkish student to examine the place of early learning experience in the learning biography: *LALEH T.*

*Laleh T.*

*Born Ankara, Turkey in 1968.*

*Laleh made an enormous impression on me when she took part in my course at DU University in Wintersemester 96-97. She impressed me immediately with her outstanding 'communicative skills', i.e. she was extraordinarily open, energetic, enthusiastic, positive, etc. Her 'outward going-ness' struck me all the more as almost without exception I have become used to the silent ghettoization of minorities (be they Turkish or Eastern European or Asian) in seminar groups. Laleh, however, was in some ways emblematic of the first generation of German-raised (if not born) Turks who have been finding their place in German universities from the beginning of the 'nineties.*

*The interview was in fact conducted in late summer 1997 and the venue was the impressive office of an absentee Professor of Italian Literature. The acoustics were excellent, the cassette-recorder on its best behaviour and the atmosphere was almost ideal for a long, ranging interview. Thus, this interview is something of an exception in that most attention was directed to the pre-university formative years, at school and during Laleh's commercial training and years at work in a local company before she took the step to move on to the university.*

*Laleh's school history deserved the attention we gave it, however. The role of language, Turkish and German, and the role of family and teachers, were crucial for Laleh's educational moves. She was obviously interested in rendering her story comprehensible. I learnt a lot from her.*

*She is, to date, the only respondent to have received a copy of the completed transcript of her interview. Her immediate reaction was rather surprised thanks. Her reaction to the 'rawness' of the presentation of her and my speech was, as far as I could judge, moderately understanding. Laleh disappeared from my view shortly after and e-mail attempts to re-contact her in order to glean some kind of reaction to the experience, as well as to propose a second interview, now that she has evidently completed her studies and is in full-time work, have – as so often occurs – not brought any results.*

Vignette 5. 2

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For *Laleh*, school was a place of relatively dramatic choices. Drawing the category out of the corpus with the keywords: *Schule/School, Lehrer\*innen/Female/Teachers, Bildung/Education, Lernen/Learn/Learning* - only a narrow definition - we get the Kwik-concordance below (Corpus Search 5.1). The line numbers in parentheses refer to the TACT-file version of this, and every, individual interview.

LALEH T.

Keywords/ KWIK concordance with 'TACT'

**BILDUNG, LERNEN, LEHRER/IN, SCHULE - Education, Learn/Learning, Teacher, School**

**EDUCATE (IMPERATIVE) bilde (1)**

(200) erste Wort, was im Koran ste ht: >bilde dich und das ist so,

**EDUCATE (Vb) bilden (2)**

(200) erm, ein Privileg, ist das, sich zu >bilden, P ist es etwas ganz

(372) hatte "Da ist so eine Firma, die P >bilden eventuell auch

bildet (2)

(201) sie wuerden erm einen auslachen!P ">bildet euch oder macht was

(206) wenn jemand P jetzt kommt und sagt ">bildet euch das bringt

**EDUCATION bildung (7/12)**

(41) von damals, dass man Leute, die eine >Bildung P hinter sich hatten

(50) gesagt, eine Frau muss auch eine >Bildung haben, die laut

(57) Eltern, die haben keine schulische >Bildung. P meine mutter hat

(152) Rem>: Erm, in welcher Hinsicht? Was >Bildung angeht? <S Res>:

(193) die da waren? <S Lal>: Also, die >Bildung ist bei uns sehr

(199) nicht so einen grossen P Wert auf >Bildung. fuer die ist das

(199) P Oder so. Bei uns ist >Bildung das Allerhoechste.

**TEACHER (MALE) lehrer (17/22)**

(21) nicht offiziell in der Schule. Der >Lehrer hat einfach gesagt,

(25) <S Lal>: Er, im Dorf ist es so, der >Lehrer sagt <Esp>ah da

schicken

(30) nur zwei Raeume, und da hat der P >Lehrer mal erstmal die

(39) wird nicht so ernst genommen, die >Lehrer auch nicht, P was ist

(39) Lehrer auch nicht, P was ist schon >Lehrer? dort <S Res>: mhm

(77) - <S Res>: Ja <S Lal>: weil mein >Lehrer mein Vater kam nicht

(79) der kam irgendwie dazu nicht. Der >Lehrer hat gesagt <Esp>du P

(94) von den Erwartungen her koennen die >Lehrer nicht allzuviel

(193) wir hatten dort einen tuerkischen >Lehrer der hat gesagt:

(207) weiss noch, dass unser tuerkis cher >Lehrer sehr enttaeuscht war

(219) .. zehnten und dann: "Ja, wo?" Die >Lehrer haben sich darueber

(309) haben wir dann irgendwann, hat ein >Lehrer sich P verplappert,

(312) und irgendwa nn kam mal ein >Lehrer der war irgendwie

(315) ab: nein Danke) dass die erm diese >Lehrer grundsaeztzlich ihre P

(317) nicht. bei uns war das so, dass die >Lehrer dann nachher P kein

(319) eine Stelle bekommen, aber der >Lehrer hat dann gesagt:

(319) die haben uns so und so, P ein >Lehrer hat uns so gesagt,

**TEACHER (FEMALE) lehrerin (8/10)**

(61) Lal>: Die haben dann eine tuerkische >Lehrerin eingestellt und sie

(67) 3 Klasse hatte ich eine tuerkische >Lehrerin. P also wir hatten

(83) . ein Jahr auf P der Hauptschule die >Lehrerin hat da nn auch

(84) hat da nn auch gesagt meine >Lehrerin sagte <Esp>du bist

(84) erstmal nicht dafuer. da hat die P >Lehrerin noch mit ihm

(86) es war, es war, ich danke dieser >Lehrerin dass sie damals

(269) eine Tochter wird Aerztin, oder >Lehrerin so diese, diese P

(323) war eigentlich keine >Lehrerin sie war

**TEACHERS lehrern (3/5)**

(218) war P das, und dann habe ich den >Lehrern erzaehlt <Esp>ja, so

(245) und erm, von daher war P ich den >Lehrern eigentlich sehr

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(310)	und das Erste, was wir von den >Lehrern & immer bekommen
<b>LEARN/ING lernen (5/7)</b>	
(94)	Schueler erstmal richtig deutsch >lernen muessen. die koennen
(108)	darauf gelegt, dass wir Kurdisch & >lernen. <S Res>: nein? <S
(112)	& achtzehn angefangen, Tuerkisch zu >lernen, sie konnte bis zum
(113)	sie da & angefangen, Tuerkisch zu >lernen. und in dem Moment
(118)	weiss nicht, wie ich es gelernt, >lernen konnte. Also ich habe
<b>SCHOOL schule (15/43)</b>	
(20)	Dorf waren, habe ich noch ein Jahr & >Schule gemacht, so ein
(20)	ich & war nicht offiziell in der >Schule. der Lehrer hat
(23)	fuenf oder so war ich schon in der & >Schule und habe ich Lesen
(45)	zu & deren Zeit gab's noch keine >Schule im Dorf meine Mutter
(45)	im Dorf; meine Mutter hat nie eine & >Schule besucht <S Res>
(47)	gesagt, ein Maedchen geht nicht zur >Schule sie & wurde nicht
(47)	sagte meine & Mutter, noch keine >Schule und nach und nach,
(47)	langsam, ich wurde & noch zur >Schule geschickt; die Gen
(84)	sagte: "Du bist zu schade fuer diese >Schule. & Wechsel sie auf
(148)	Die Anderen, uns so mehr um die >Schule & gekuemmert, nicht
(219)	das nicht, geh weiter ... auf die >Schule. du koenntest aus dir
(221)	wirklich meine Eltern wieder zur >Schule geordert, & beordert!
(223)	ich war froh, dass ich dann auf die >Schule & weitergegangen bin,
(279)	deren Kinder waren ja auch auf der >Schule, & und ich wuerde
(322)	es war, das war eine kaufmaennische >Schule, & Bankkaufleute das

Corpus Search 5.1

A brief glance through this gives *Laleh's* concentration on the role of her teachers (*Lehrer* and *Lehrerinnen*/male and female teachers: 28 mentions in her interview). A further striking feature of *Laleh's* talk is the role she allocates to her family, and within this, to her mother in particular.

**LALEH T.**

**KEYWORDS: Familie/Family - Mutter/Mother - Vater/Father -**  
**KWIK concordance with 'TACT'**

**FAMILY familie (8/23)**

(10)	bin in Ankara geboren, aber meine >Familie kommt aus Karst das
(54)	praktisch mitgeholfen fuer die. uhm >Familie & mit zu arbeiten
(94)	nur tuerkisch sprechen. & in der >Familie da uhm beim
(106)	uns deutsch zu sprechen, & in der >Familie, nur mit den Eltern
(201)	die sind von der >Familie her schon gezwungen,
(268)	vielleicht auch durch die >Familie meine Eltern
(284)	in diese Sache? <S Lal>: Die >Familie die konnten sich
(301)	der Vater, ich weiss noch bei einer >Familie da hat der Vater

**MOTHER mutter (22/32)**

(45)	noch keine Schule im Dorf; meine >Mutter hat nie eine & Schule
(47)	ich, zu der Zeit, sagte meine & >Mutter, noch keine Schule,
(57)	keine schulische Bildung. & Meine >Mutter hat mit 36 gelernt zu
(83)	und Ihre Mutter? <S Lal>: Meine >Mutter, die hat erstmal auch
(83)	auch da mitgemacht. Aber meine & >Mutter war immer dafuer,
(112)	<S Res>: Ja, aber - <S Lal>: Meine >Mutter hat gesagt <Esp>Ach
(112)	wozu?" dann ja Tuerkisch. ja, meine >Mutter hat mit & achtzehn
(121)	<S Lal>: eigentlich nicht. Meine >Mutter, meine Mutter hat uns
(121)	nicht. meine Mutter, meine >Mutter hat uns gefoerdert, &
(121)	Mutter hat uns gefoerdert, & meine >Mutter hat - <S Res>: Ja,
(123)	der Vater, letztendlich hat meine >Mutter entschieden. <S Res>:
(127)	er war da, dann hat er mit meiner >Mutter gesprochen, hat sie &
(127)	schicken wir sie". also, wenn meine >Mutter ihr Amen oder & ihren
(131)	so ungefaehr. so, und ja, & meine >Mutter hat, mein Vater war,
(133)	hat er nicht hingekriegt . Meine >Mutter hat gesagt <Esp>nein,



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(133) das war letztendlich meine P >Mutter, sie hat uns  
(137) so, P ein paar Jahre spaeter. Meine >Mutter hat ja gesagt <Esp>ich  
(138) da kam er ja, P ok, sechs, meine >Mutter wollte nicht so viele  
(150) war bei uns nicht so . da hat meine >Mutter vielleicht die und  
(222) mit meinem Vater, ich glaube meine >Mutter war auch mit dabei,  
(298) <S Lal>: nein, nein, niemals. Meine >Mutter hat uns immer damals  
(305) <S Lal>: ja, das kam spaeter. Meine >Mutter hat gesagt <Esp>gib

#### **FATHER vater (17/26)**

(12) also ein P Jahr vorher war mein >Vater hier in Deutschland ,  
(45) wie war es? <S Lal>: Erm, mein >Vater hat im Militaer Lesen  
(77) ja <S Lal>: weil mein Lehrer, mein >Vater kam nicht mich auf die  
(81) eure Kinder da und da an". Mein >Vater kam nicht dazu. er P  
(84) P Eltern ueberreden muessen. Mein >Vater war erstmal nicht  
(123) P gesprochen. <S Lal>: Ja, der >Vater letztendlich hat  
(125) zu den - Eltern-... <S Lal>: Mein >Vater. <S Res>: Treffen. <S  
(131) so, und ja, P meine Mutter hat, mein >Vater war, erm, ich weiss  
(166) <S Res>: ja. <S Lal>: Nur mein >Vater nicht - erm, die sind  
(166) da rein gekommen, P weil der >Vater ja dort gearbeitet hat  
(202) wenn jemand nicht will, ach mein >Vater kann ja auch auf mich  
(221) und dann haben die mit meinem >Vater ich glaube meine  
(269) ich nur ein Kind war, da hat mein >Vater gesagt, eine Tochter  
(280) aus einer Arbeiterfamilie, mein >Vater ist P als Gastarbeiter  
(301) nichts machen koennen. P Weil der >Vater ich weiss noch bei  
(301) noch bei einer Familie, da hat der >Vater gesagt <Esp>ich will  
(302) das Zeugnis gefaelscht, damit der >Vater ihm nicht (.)

#### **Corpus Search 5. 2**

Both of these concordances are significant for the way in which *Laleh* constructs her learning biography. In fact, more than in any other interview respondent's interactive work, in *Laleh's* narratives we are continually referred back to authoritative figures in her life course. Gender and ethnic reasons may go some way towards accounting for *Laleh's* deployment of the family, of her mother, but also of crucial interventions in her learning experience by teachers throughout her school career. More than any other respondent, *Laleh* provides rich detail regarding the socio-economic milieu(s) in which she grew up, both in Ankara, in the Turkish village of her first school experiences as well as regarding the various stages of her schooling in Germany, during which parental aspirations and possibilities and the initiative of individual teachers made such a difference to her learning process. Her family – and their educational options – prove to be central to her learning biography. *Laleh's* discourses of learning are shaped by intercultural experience, by an existence *between* cultures and languages, and as part of an initially patriarchal family structure broken down to a large extent by the very workings of *Laleh's* education and educational chances.

Her school life is chequered and emblematic for a Turk of her generation: born in Ankara and educated in Germany.

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**LALEH: 'JUST SEND HER ALONG'**

**Extract 5.3**

1	Lal:	und uhm so ich habe dann in der	and uhm so I did a year of
2		Tuerkei damals ein Jahr noch im	school still in Turkey
3		Dorf als wir noch fuer ein Jahr	still in the village we
4		im Dorf waren (1.0) habe ich	were in the village for a
5		noch ein Jahr Schule gemacht	year (1.0) a bit of (1.0)
6		(1.0) so ein bisschen Lesen und	reading and writing I
7		Schreiben schon gelernt aber ich	learnt I wasn't officially
8		war nicht offiziell in der	in the school the teacher
9		Schule der Lehrer hat einfach	just said <Esp>oh just
10	→Esp	gesagt <Esp>ach schicken Sie sie	send her along
11		mal	

Thus, at the outset of her narratives, the authoritative voice of the village teacher is invoked (→Esp). Her father learnt to read and write in the army, her mother at the age of 36 in Germany. In Germany till she was finished at the primary school *Laleh* was in an all-Turkish class. She felt her own success in German in relation to her friends:

**LALEH: ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES – LEARNING GERMAN**

**Extract 5.4**

1	Lal:	und da kamen wir dann Anfang 75	and we came then at the
2		habe ich dann wurde ich dann	beginning of 75 then I then I
3		hier eingeschult uhm das	was sent to school here uhm
4		Besondere ist bis zur 4 Klasse	the point is till the 4 <sup>th</sup> class
5		war ich in einer tuerkischen	I was in a turkish class
6		Klasse waren alle Tuerken	everyone was turkish
7	R	mhmm	mhmm
8	Lal:	uhm und die bis zur 3 Klasse	uhm they till the 3rd class I
9		hatte ich eine tuerkische	had a turkish teacher so in
10		Lehrerin also wir hatten ja	between we had one or two
11		zwischendurch ein zwei Faecher:	subjects: in german we had
12		Deutsch Deutsch hatte wir und da	german and there was geography
13		war noch Erdkunde oder irgendwas	too or something we had
14		hatten wir auch Mathematik oder	mathematics too or something
15		so andere Sachen wurden uns auf	other things were taught to us
16		tuerkisch beigebracht weil	in turkish because this part
17		dieser Vorort von Dinslaken der	of Dinslaken it had 80% turks
18		hatte 80% Tuerken wir sind	we were basically brought up
19		praktisch so dort aufgezogen uhm	there uhm grew up there so
20		aufgewachsen so und irgendwann	sometime or other uhm just a
21		uhm ein moment was war das?	moment what was that?
22		Anfang der 80igen sind wir	beginning of the 80s we moved
23	SLE →1	umgezogen von da es war eine	away from there it was a
24		deutsche Gegend und das hat	german area and that made my
25		meine Entwicklung mitgemacht und	development and then I had
26		dann hatte ich nun deutsche	german friends then (.) before
27		Freunde (.) vorher hatte ich	I had also had one she had for
28		zwar auch eine die hat mir auch	me that was also a reason why
29		deswegen hatte ich auch so einen	I had a (.) start as far as
30		(.) Vorsprung was die deutsche	the german language was
31		Sprache anging weil (.) ich	concerned because (.) I was
32		konnte mich mit ihr unterhalten	able to talk to her with the
33		mit den anderen habe ich mich	others I spoke turkish of
34		natuerlich in Tuerkisch	course that's why it wasn't so

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35		unterhalten deswegen ging das	<i>good with german</i>
36		mit der deutschen Sprache nicht	
37		so gut	
38	R:	mhmm	<i>mhmm</i>
39	→2 Lal:	in der uhm die meisten meiner	<i>in the uhm most of my girl</i>
40		Freundinnen die konnten nicht	<i>friends they couldn't really</i>
41		mal richtig deutsch obwohl sie	<i>speak german well although</i>
42		vielleicht hier geboren waren	<i>perhaps they were born here</i>

*Laleh's* account here is largely chronological, marked by complicatory and evaluatory details (subjects, teacher, language, concentration of Turkish immigrant population) which enrich the account with *Laleh's* personal analysis of her background and progress as she sees it. An important 'serious life event' (given as SLE in the extract) – moving to a 'German' neighbourhood – is produced at →1 (SLE) and the central role of language in her learning biography is thus accounted for (25-37).

At →2, *Laleh* enacts a self-repair and shifts from generalization about the effects on her German language skills to anecdotal evidence (her girl-friends) which can be taken as contextualization of her previous remarks and as such as a strong knowledge claim: she, who was born and schooled in Turkey, overtook her Turkish girl-friends who were born in Germany (39-42).

LALEH: 'HE DIDN'T GET ROUND TO IT'

Extract 5.5

School is a deciding point in her life. She went to the vocational secondary school (*Hauptschule*) and not the (Upper) Secondary.

1	Lal:	weil mein Lehrer mein	<i>because my teacher my</i>
2		Vater kam nicht mich auf	<i>father didn't get round to</i>
3		die Realschule anzumelden	<i>registering me for the</i>
4		ging irgendwie nicht	<i>Realschule it wasn't</i>
			<i>possible for some reason</i>
5	R:	wieso? keine Information?	<i>how come? no information?</i>
6	Lal:	uhm der kam irgendwie dazu	<i>uhm he just didn't get</i>
7		nicht der Lehrer hat gesagt	<i>round to it the teacher</i>
8	Esp →1	<ESp>du kannst dich ruhig	<i>said &lt;ESp&gt;go on you can</i>
9		auf die Realschule anmelden	<i>register for the Upper</i>
10		das war so damals die	<i>Secondary it was like that</i>
11		Grundschullehrer haben	<i>then that the primary</i>
12	SLE →2	irgendwie die Eltern dazu	<i>school teachers pushed the</i>
13		bewegt	<i>parents sort of</i>

Once again we hear the voice of a significant other, and once again it is the teacher (→Esp 1). Teachers thus exerted pressure to move her up to the Comprehensive and

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family differences and cultural influences come to the fore here: the father is consistently present as an obstacle to assimilation and learning, albeit rather more passive than active, while the mother (I refer again to the KWIK-concordance in Corpus Search 5.2 above and the references to *Laleh's* mother) emerges increasingly in *Laleh's* learning biography as a force for progress and improvement. The influence of the teachers in moving the parents to put *Laleh* in another school is recorded at →2. *Laleh's* description is intentionally biographized and evaluated as a serious life event' (marked here as SLE).

**LALEH: A CRUCIAL MOVE**

**Extract 5.6**

1		Lal:	meine Mutter die hat erstmal auch	at first my mother
2	→1		da mitgemacht aber meine Mutter	went along with this
3			war immer dafuer dass wir Maedchen	but my mother was
4			was also uns bildungsmaessig uhm	always for letting us
5			hocharbeiten das hat man gemerkt	girls improve
6			als wir uhm ich war ein Jahr auf	ourselves education-
7			der Hauptschule die Lehrerin hat	wise that got clear
8			dann auch gesagt meine Lehrerin	when a year later in
9	Esp	→2	sagte <ESpB>du bist zu schade fuer	the Hauptschule the
10			diese Schule wechsel sie auf die	teacher my teacher
11			Realschule um<EspE> und ich bin	said <ESp>you're too
12			dann rueber ich habe meine Eltern	good for this school
13			ueberreden muessen mein Vater war	change over to the
14			erstmal nicht dafuer da hat die	comprehensive <EspE>
15			Lehrerin noch mit ihm persoenlich	and I changed over
16			gesprochen da hat er gesagt	then I had to
17	Esp	→3	<ESp>ok soll sie und dann war ich	persuade my parents my
18			auf der Realschule da musste ich	father was against it
19			aber die eine Klasse wiederholen	at first but the
20			aber war mir recht es hat mir sehr	teacher she spoke to
21			gut getan da kam ich zum ersten	him personally and he
22			mal in eine deutsche Klasse (1.0)	said <ESp>OK let her
23			so und da so es ging dann auch es	go that was the first
24	SLE	→4	war es war ich danke dieser	time I was in a German
25			Lehrerin dass sie damals mich auf	class (1.0) I thank
26			die Realschule geschickt hat weil	that teacher (.)
27			ich weiss nicht wie mein Leben	because I don't know
28			sich geaendert haette wenn ich auf	how different my life
29			der Hauptschule geblieben waere wo	would have been if I
30			achtzig bis neunzig Prozent noch	had remained at the
31			Auslaender waren	secondary modern where
				80 to 90 per cent were
				foreigners

*Laleh* manages the narrative skilfully so that the gender conflicts within the family and at school are marked linguistically by the greater space given to the references to the mother (→1 in lines 1 and 2)) and by the economy of words spent on the father. While the embedded speech of teachers (→2) is given at length and with considerable rhetorical-prosodic precision (over lines 9-11) in which we can hear the

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teacher's voice talking to Laleh herself ('*du bist zu schade...*'/'you're too good for...') and then presumably to her parents ('*wechsel sie...*'/'change her...'), the father's (grudging?) acquiescence is taciturn, almost speechless (→3). We hear in fact the words '*ok soll sie*'/'ok let her (go)'. *Laleh* frames here another serious life event (given as →4 SLE), thanking the initiative of the teacher who insisted on furthering her education. *Laleh* can be heard to be constructing a consistent biography of growth.

Looking now at *Sara*, teachers played a lesser role – a less powerful role - than with *Laleh*. The concept "*Bildung*" (Education) was not mentioned explicitly by her once.

**SARA**

**Keywords:** Education and family  
**KWIK concordance in TACT**

**APPRENTICESHIP/TRAINING ausbildung (24/32)**

(383) habe Abitur gemacht, habe dann eine >Ausbildung als B  
(457) Jahre. der aelteste hat auch eine >Ausbildung zum  
(460) und er ist dann, uhm, B nach der >Ausbildung hat er ein  
(588) studieren, aber B ich wollte diese >Ausbildung zwischendurch  
(592) ich gedacht <Esp>gut da mache ich die >Ausbildung und dann kann ich  
(594) B war nur, dass ich dann die >Ausbildung gemacht habe und  
(611) B wie ich gedacht haben: erst die >Ausbildung, dann das  
(613) haben alle vorher eigentlich eine >Ausbildung gemacht, bis B  
(616) faengt ja man an, wenn man eine >Ausbildung machen will, muss  
(672) was ich moechte, weil in so einer >Ausbildung laeuft durch,  
(681) tja, ich habe dann bei der B >Ausbildung Leute  
(742) ja, man meint, man ist waehrend der >Ausbildung wirklich fast B  
(747) das ist ja auch so, dass man in der >Ausbildung irgendwo auch  
(752) weil man ja eigentlich waehrend der >Ausbildung alle vier Wochen  
(763) nur das. ich meine, man macht die >Ausbildung, damit man B  
(767) B was lernt man noch waehrend der >Ausbildung? <S Res>: Also  
(770) Perestroika und dann fing diese >Ausbildung an und da B kam  
(775) das lag daran, dass B ich in der >Ausbildung war. als ich  
(777) waehrend man sonst in der B >Ausbildung eigentlich nur  
(778) anders. und fuer mich war die B >Ausbildung irgendwas, wo man  
(783) auch viel Mist gebaut waehrend der >Ausbildung. B also, ja  
(787) kann. also wenn ich heute die >Ausbildung nochmal machen  
(790) das lag daran, dass ich wuerde die >Ausbildung auch anders

**FAMILY familie (1/23)**

(535) nein! das stimmt nicht, dass meine >Familie redet nicht die B

**MOTHER mutter (7/32)**

(424) so richtig. es B ist mehr meine >Mutter, die also ...  
(431) aber ich bin lieber zu meiner >Mutter gegangen, als zu ihm  
(470) da drueber unterhaelt, dass meine >Mutter fragt, ja, weil sie  
(477) <S Sus>: ja. ich weiss, dass meine >Mutter es lieber gesehen  
(513) diese Konkurswelle B und meine >Mutter hat in der Firma  
(517) Stoff verkauft, und das hat meine >Mutter dann gemacht. Mein B  
(519) Spanien B zurueckgezogen. meine >Mutter hat die Firma

**SCHOOL schule (15/43)**

(382) ... uhm, bin hier ganz normal zu B >Schule gegangen, habe Abitur  
(390) so war das B das logischste, weiter >Schule zu machen, in der  
(390) weiter Schule zu machen, in der >Schule zu bleiben .... <S  
(541) ich war - ja ich war auf einer >Schule, auf dem

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(542) von fruehmorgns um 8 bis 16 Uhr >Schule und eine sehr sehr  
(544) das P Klima sehr sehr gut in der >Schule, weil man sich ja  
(544) man ist nicht nach der, nach der P >Schule sofort nach Hause  
(546) waren also ein P bisschen als "rote >Schule" verschrien, weil wir  
(551) war das Klima sehr gut an der >Schule, aber - <S Res>:  
(558) was ich gelernt habe P in der >Schule, was Leute hier aus  
(559) Duisburg oder Krefeld, die hier zu >Schule P gegangen sind, was  
(560) P gegangen sind, was sie in der >Schule gelernt haben, ja,  
(609) einfach keine P Lust mehr auf >Schule, und die haben  
(769) ja. es ist erm, wenn man in der >Schule, wenn P man sein  
(812) sich anders natuerlich, nach der >Schule ist es ja P auch so,  
**SCHOOLS schulen (1)**  
(556) Nordrhein-Westfalen hier von den P >Schulen hoere, dann denke  
**SCHOOL-TIME schulzeit (1)**  
(812) man sehr viel unternommen in der >Schulzeit und man trifft die  
**UNI-COURSES studiengaenge (1/2)**  
(424) die also ... Bescheid weiss, unsere >Studiengaenge und ... <S  
**I STUDY studiere (3)**  
(589) nicht, ich habe gedacht, sonst >studiere ich da irgendwie in  
(669) da habe ich P gedacht, wenn ich >studiere und ich breche ab,  
(712) lerne P und dann Wirtschaft >studiere, mich doch nicht so  
**STUDYING studieren (9/13)**  
(384) gemacht und danach angefangen zu P >studieren. <S Res>: Das  
(433) habe dann, Wirtschaft zu P >studieren, da hat er mir  
(490) auch ueberlegt, auf Lehramt zu >studieren, also  
(585) wenn ich dann sofort P anfangen zu >studieren, dann bin ich  
(587) ist, zu arbeiten. ich wollte immer >studieren, aber P ich wollte  
(593) Jahre oder fuef Jahre Wirtschaft >studieren oder nicht?" das  
(612) haben, die jetzt P Wirtschaft >studieren aus meinem  
(640) wollte, fUnf Jahre irgendwas zu >studieren und dann nachher  
(641) koennen, wie das ist, P zu >studieren. ich dachte: "Gut,  
**STUDIED studiert (11/14)**  
(404) gegangen und hat da Wirtschaft >studiert. <S Res>: uhm. <S  
(478) wenn P ich Sprachen oder so was >studiert haette, nicht  
(485) Wirtschaft. Wenn man Wirtschaft P >studiert, heisst es ja  
(489) deshalb habe ich es ein bisschen >studiert, ich P hatte auch  
(493) oder P Geschichte oder so was >studiert, aber dann habe ich  
(520) P meine ganzen Schwestern haben >studiert, { ... } ich habe  
(572) sehr viele, P die auf Lehramt dann >studiert haben, sehr viele,  
(572) haben, sehr viele, die Theologie >studiert haben, das hat mich  
(612) und uhm, ja einige, P die gleich >studiert haben. aber die,  
(644) P Loch! Wie man eigentlich >studiert. <S Res>: also, das  
(674) P vielleicht, wenn man Wirtschaft >studiert, weiss man  
**STUDIED studierte (1)**  
(655) ich weiss, ich kannte keinen, der >studierte. ich kannte  
**STUDIES studium (4/7)**  
(430) wenn ich eine Frage habe zum >Studium oder zur Berufswahl,  
(444) gut bin an der Universitaet oder >Studium ist nicht ganz so  
(460) P nach der Ausbildung hat er ein >Studium angefangen:  
(611) erst die Ausbildung, dann das >Studium. und erm, ja einige,  
**FATHER vater (5/26)**  
(392) was machen die? <S Sus>: uhm, mein >Vater ist Exportmanager,  
(442) das mir sehr P viel, dass mein >Vater, also stolz auf mich  
(471) P ist an dem Beruf von meinem >Vater, sie sagt: "Ja, heute  
(518) gemacht. mein P Grossvater, ihr >Vater ist praktisch, hat  
(523) an, und hat dann in England meinen >Vater kennengelernt. <S

### Corpus Search 5.3

Her experience was positive. She develops a straightforward and brisk narrative, listing in neat succession the clear steps of her life to date:

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Sara G.

*Born in Reading, UK in 1972. Moved to Germany as a result of her father's work when a child.*

*Educated in the Hannover area. After her Abitur, Sara chose a two year commercial training instead of progressing directly to the university. She chose to be trained in her father's place of work, a leading biscuit making firm, in which he was a sales representative for overseas customers.*

*Upon completing her apprenticeship she stayed on in the company for a further 9 months before making the move to DU University to study business administration. This move away from home was a significant step in her learning biography. She told how the choice fell on DU as a place of study for relatively chance reasons. She travelled down from Hannover to look at Cologne University, but found it – as do so many – too big, too crowded and probably too impersonal. She travelled to former East Germany (Leipzig), too, but her decision fell on DU because of the notorious first-position ranking DU University was given in 1993 in the Hamburg weekly illustrated news magazine "Stern". A cause for many snap decisions in the nineties to do economics at DU.*

*The interview was held in the Italian Department in the absentee Professor's stately office and Sara proved an assiduous respondent, thoughtful and prepared to re-consider her ideas where they seemed unable to provide her with ready answers.*

*A particularity of this interview was the role played by her family – and the different roles in her biography that her father and mother played – and by the 'professional' status of her family. Much of the talk was taken up by establishing the roles each parent had had in Sara's decision-making processes. This topic was a source of difficulty at times and was essentially dispreferred. The level of difficulty experienced at times over the role of her family led me afterwards to re-consider a certain aggressive form of questioning that up to then I had practiced. There was a significant element of 'intervention' in my interview style which in retrospect seems potentially manipulative and disempowering.*

Vignette 5.3

SARA 1: INITIAL ACCOUNT

Extract 5.7

1	SG:	einfach über das Leben? hehehh	I was born in Reading
2		ja also ich wurde	that's 40 kilometers
3		neunzehnhundert 1.9.72 in	away from London when
4	→PP	Reading geboren und das ist	I was five I came to
5		vierzig Kilometer von London	Germany uhm I went to
6		entfernt (1.0) uhm mit fünf	school here normally
7		Jahren bin ich nach Deutschland	did my Abitur (A-
8	→PP	gezogen (1.0) uhm bin hier ganz	levels) trained to be
9	→PP	normal zu Schule gegangen habe	an industrial sales

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10	→PP	Abitur gemacht habe dann eine	clerk with Baalsen
11		Ausbildung als Industriekauffrau	the biscuit makers?
12		bei Baalsen Keksfabrik? in	(.) in Hannover and
13	→PP	Hannover gemacht und danach	then began to study
14	→PP	angefangen zu studieren	

Typical for the account is the drumming list of past participles (→PP) which we saw in *Marie's* initial account of her learning biography (4.1.) and above in *Özlem's* account (5.1). Here we have 'geboren', 'gezogen', 'gegangen', 'gemacht', 'gemacht', 'angefangen' (born, moved, went, did, did, began). Sara wishes to establish at the outset her membership of a category characterized as 'normal' (lines 8-9).

Turning to the next extract, remaining on in school after 16 was never a case of luck or chance as with *Laleh*, and did not depend on outside interventions in her learning biography. Staying on was, in fact, the 'most logical thing' to do (→2). Hesitation and tentative expression of opinion ('glaube ich'/I think') underline her doubts at the moment of narrating her school history as to her motives at the time these decisions were taken (→1).

SARA 2: UNQUESTIONED MOVES

Extract 5. 8

1	R:	das heisst hier ganz normal	that means everything
2		Schule gemacht Abitur (1.0)	normal you did A-levels
3		aber warum war das ganz	(1.0) but why was that so
4		normal?	normal?
5	SG:	uhm (1.0) ja ich habe nie	uhm (1.0) I've never
6		darueber nachgedacht	thought about that
7		frueher aufzuhoeren man	leaving school earlier
8	→1	kann ja mit 16 glaube ich	you can leave at 16 I
9		Realschulabschluss machen	think do secondary school
10		und 15 Hauptschulabschluss	and 15 secondary school
11		aber mit 15 oder 16 haette	leaving exam at 15 or 16
12		ich wirklich noch nicht	I really wouldn't have
13		gewusst was ich arbeiten	known what work I should
14	→2	soll so war das das	go for so that was the
15		logischste weiter Schule zu	most logical thing to do
16		machen in der Schule zu	keep on going to school
17		bleiben (1.0)	stay on in school (1.0)



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We shall turn now to *Carola*.

*Carola O.*

*Born near Düsseldorf in 1969.*

*Her parents, as she related and as became increasingly central to her learning biography, possessed only basic school education. Father a lathe-operator and mother housewife. Carola was the first in her family (she has one sister) to have any contact with the university.*

*Carola left school at 16 to take an apprenticeship as an office clerk with the chemicals giant Bayer in Leverkusen, where her father was also employed. On completion of the apprenticeship, she stayed on at Bayer for three years. This was the period that saw her employed in the haulage and freight department of the firm, working together with a warehouse full of men, co-ordinating long-distance lorry drivers on shift work, and aged only 18-19 years old. The significance of this pre-HE experience for her own self-esteem and as a shaping force in her university development later can hardly be exaggerated.*

*Carola, both in her individual interview and in the pair-interview with Henry, was an exceptionally vigorous respondent. Her narrative style was emphatic and prosodically upbeat. Her verbal emphasis was frequently complemented by violent table-rapping with a heavily be-ringed set of fingers. She produced the densest and longest stretches of pure narrative and delivered her talk with the greatest panache.*

*Carola is the only student respondent I had ever met before they attended my course at the university. I first encountered her in her first three weeks at DU University in distant 1992 when she was obliged to attend a supplementary English course before the first study-semester began. As she did not possess the "Abitur", having obtained in the year before coming to the university and after her time at Bayer the "Fachoberschulreife" (like a FE leaving qualification), she was eligible for a place at DU University but was required to complete supplementary courses in English, Mathematics and German in order to be allowed to go on for the complete Diploma in Business Administration.*

**Vignette 5. 4**

*Carola* develops a spirited narrative of transition from shy apprentice to self-confident colleague in a rough work environment characterised by massive sexism. The listing style of the initial phase of the narrative where the scene is set and the various responsibilities for someone so young (18) are heavily stressed, is broken halfway by increasing pauses and hesitation. The original version gives ample evidence of dramatic development of the narrative with linguistic and paralinguistic

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means. The awkwardness of the sexual harassment topic - related here for the first time in the context of a 'serious' interview situation with a university teacher - is unfolded with massive use of modal particles (given as <MP> in the original TACT text, and represented mainly by "halt", "irgendwie", *eigentlich*", *wirklich*") given here as "you know", "so", "sort of", "really", "actually". The interweaving of linguistic and paralinguistic markers of hesitation and uncertainty stresses the difficulty involved in recreating a narrative from a difficult experience. *Carola* finds a solution to her narrative via a shift in 'discourse': her internal dialogue with her own attitude suggests a way out of sexual harassment. Her own thoughts are called upon at →2: '*du musst einfach Kontern*' / 'you've got to give as good as you get'. This insertion of embedded speech also shifts the time-frame and is a powerful prosodic device for enhancing tellability.

Her success in transforming the work situation, despite the concrete difficulties of harassment (→1), is in some ways ambiguous when she describes her success as having cancelled out her gender in the work place (→3). Nevertheless, her resistance represents a milestone in her personal development and a radical realignment of her work-identity and feeling of self-worth, and is signalled in the interview by *Carola* rapping the table top loudly and piling up modal particles (signalled here with → and the number of MPs, e.g. →1MP and here most frequently represented by '*eigentlich*'/'in fact' and '*wirklich*'/'really') into her narrative and sometimes employing them in intriguing and highly dramatic modal 'bunches' ('*wie es dann wirklich geht und ich hatte halt wirklich* (.) *da wirklich*'/'how it then really is and I had just really (.) really' - lines 75-79).

CAROLA: A NARRATIVE OF GROWTH

Extract 5.9

1	CO:	wenn ich mit achtzehn bewarb da	at eighteen there weren't so
2		waren nicht so viele Stellen es	many training jobs there
3		gab halt wirklich Probleme die	were really big problems in
4		ganzen Auszubildenden zu	taking on trainees (.) so I
5		uebernehmen (.) da bin ich dann	came in this department
6		in eine Abteilung gekommen da	where I'd been before where I
7		war ich noch (.) war ich halt	was before (.) but I was
8		schon vorlauter geworden aber	still pretty shy (.) and I
9		immer noch ein bisschen	was put in this department
10		schuechtern (.) bin dann in	with about 20 men (...) and
11		eine Abteilung gekommen zu	I had to do day and night
12		zwanzig Maennern (2.0) und	shifts and did the freight
13		musste Tag- und Nachtschicht	orders and had to send

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14		machen und hab dann Disposition	drivers to Dormagen or
15		gemacht und musste dann so LKW	wherever and i had two
16		Fahrer nach Dormagen schicken	walky-talkies (.) two
17		und dergleichen hatte dann	telephones and two PCs (.)
18		irgendwie zwei Funkgeraete (.)	and all the time I was
19		zwei Telefone und zwei PCs (.)	talking to the foremen
20		und musste halt die ganze Zeit	calming them down who used
21		mit Meistern sprechen die	to ring in completely
22		besaenftigen die voellig	aggressive (.) I had to deal
23		aggressiv angerufen haben (.)	with only with drivers from
24		musste nur mit nur Fahrern von	the lorries you know sending
25		irgendwelchen LKWs irgendwie	out messages and you know
26		durchfunken irgendwie (.)	(.) telling them where they
27		angeben wo sie hinfahren sollen	had to drive to [laughs] and
28		heheheh und uhm da arbeiteten	uhm and there were only
29		halt irgendwie nur zwanzig	about 20 blokes working
30		Maenner und eine Frau am	there and one woman on the
31		Telefon die irgendwie vierzig	telephones she was about 40
32		war (.) und das war halt auch	(.) and that was a bit of a
33		ein Problem weil ich war	problem I was 18 and still
34		achtzehn noch relativ	pretty shy::: (.) and uhm
35		:schuechtern: (.) und uhm	
36	R:	das was dann hart oder?	that was pretty hard then?
37	CO:	/das war sehr hart das Problem	that was really hard the
38		ist halt uhm das am Anfang	problem is basically uhm
39		kamen immer sexuelle	that at the beginning there
40	→1	Anspielungen (.) aber massiv	was loads of sexual innuendo
41		(.) so und ich hab mich dann	(.) but really bad (.) and
42		irgendwann zu Hause hingestellt	so in the end I sort of sat
43	→2	und zu [??] gesagt <Esp>OK du	down at home and said
44	→1MP	musst einfach kontern und dann	<Esp>you've got to give as
45		ist in Ordnung (.) anfangs bin	good as you get and then
46	→1MP	ich halt rot geworden weil mir	it'll be ok (.) in the
47	→1MP	wurde teilweise Playboy vor die	beginning I just used to go
48		Nase gelegt und gesagt <Esp> du	red and because sometimes
49		sieht bestimmt auch so aus (.)	they used to come and stick
50	→1MP	und uhm es war eigentlich sehr	Playboy under my nose and
51		lustig denn nach drei Monaten	say <Esp>I bet you look like
52		kam dann langsam von mir so	that underneath (.) and (.)
53		richtig einer zurueck und dann	and uhm it was actually
54		war ich aber auch die Zeit die	really funny because after
55		ich dann gearbeitet hab bei den	about three months I began
56		Maennern voellig :integriert:	to give my own bit and then
57		die kamen dann mit ihren	during the time I worked
58		Eheproblemen zu mir haben mir	with the men I was really
59		alles erklart und uhm ich war	integrated::: they came then
60	→1MP	→3 dann also praktisch auch ein	to me with their marriage
61		Mann ich war nicht mehr	problems and they told me
62	→1MP	unbedingt eine Frau (.) uhm wo	everything and uhm I was
63		ich mich dann anfang zu wehren	practically a man for them
64	→1MP	so haben die eigentlich wie	and wasn't really a woman
65		Kumpeln mit mir geredet (.) und	any more (.) uhm when I
66	→1MP	war fuer mich eigentlich sehr	began to fight back they
67		interessant wo wo kann man halt	began treating me like a
68	→1MP	wirklich drei Jahre lang mit	mate (.) and that was
69	→1MP	zwanzig Maennern [??] wirklich	actually really interesting
70		von (.) die waren	for me where where can you
71		fuenfundzwanzig bis	work for three years with 20
72		fuenfundfuenfzig die Alterstufe	men really they were 25 to
73	→1MP	(.) und wir haben wirklich alle	55 and we really talked
74	→1MP	[strikes table] wirklich ganz	about everything totally
75		normal gesprochen erzahlt wie	normally [strikes table]
76	→1MP	es dann wirklich geht und ich	told each other how things
77	→2MP	hatte halt wirklich (.) da	really are and I had really
78	→1MP	wirklich mal die Chance	(.) really the chance really

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79	→1MP	wirklich mal das Denken von	to hear the way men think
80		Maennern zu mitzubekommen ueber	for three years I found that
81		drei Jahre das fand ich	really interesting I would
82	→1MP	eigentlich sehr interessant	be sorry to have missed out
83		wollte ich auch nicht mehr	on it (.) I think it was
84	→1MP	missen (.) fand ich eigentlich	really like: really funny
85		:so: ganz witzig hhehhehh (.)	hhehhehh (.) yeah=
86		ja =	

**'Biographization'**

The narrative interview, then, is a vehicle in Marotzki's words for the 'biographization' of experience - a bringing of 'order' to events. Order is established in the narrative process itself, during and through which meaning is constructed and allocated to sections of personal life experience. This 'biographization' of a life is by definition a communicated (re-)telling and the telling renders it meaningful (Marotzki, 1991: 189-92). The 'verbalization' of self in the telling (Schiffrin, 1996: 168) is meaningful yet unfinished, incomplete. As we saw already, Linde underlines two central characteristics of the life story: *coherence* and *incompleteness* (Linde, 1993: 25). This tension, this 'in-process' experience is apparent, then, in the previous extracts. We have seen that

- events are brought into order
- meaning is allocated to sections of personal life experience
- life is accumulatively rendered a biographized life through communicative re-telling
- verbalization of the re-told self is by definition meaningful, yet incomplete
- the learning biography is coherent yet incomplete

**Learning Decisions and Experience**

The question of direction and aim in the choice of vocational training and/or university studies, sounding boards, so to speak, for the tension inherent in the on-going production of the learning biography, is touched on by my research question. The data for *Laleh* and *Sara* reveal a less than homogenous picture. *Laleh*, for example, narrates how she wanted to leave school at 16:

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**LALEH: EARLY LEARNING DECISIONS**

**Extract 5.10**

1		Lal:	ja als ich die zehnte	yeah when I finished
2			beendet hatte habe ich mich	the tenth I put in
3			beworben ich wollte eine	applications I wanted
4			Ausbildung haben machen	an apprenticeship my
5			mein Traum war damals	dream then was to be
6			Industriekauffrau oder	an industrial sales
7			Grosshandelskauffrau	clerk or in wholesale
8			Buerokauffrau und damals	or in an office it was
9			war das sehr problematisch	difficult then to get
10			mit den Ausbildungsplaetzen	a place and then I got
11			und dann hatte ich dann ein	an offer it was for a
12			Angebot bekommen es war	training post in
13			Grosshandelskauffrau in	wholesale in a drinks
14			einer Getraenkefirma in	company and I told my
15			einem so Grosshandel war	teachers <ESp>yeah so
16			das und dann habe ich den	I've got a training
17	→1	Esp	Lehrern erzaehlt <ESp>ja so	place after the tenth
18			habe ich eine	and then <ESp>where
19			Ausbildungsstelle nach der	then? the teachers
20	→2	Esp	zehnten und dann <ESp>ja	found out more what
21			wo? die Lehrer haben sich	kind of job that was
22			darueber informiert was das	then they came to me
23			fuer ein Job ist und so da	and said <ESpB>Laleh I
24			kam sie zu mir und haben	wouldn't recommend
25	→3	Esp	gesagt <ESpB>Laleh ich	that stay on at school
26			wuerde dir empfehlen mach	you could make much
27			das nicht geh weiter auf	more of yourself go to
28			die Schule du koenntest aus	grammar school or do
29			dir viel mehr machen mach	the GVNQ or go to the
30			Gymnasium oder oder	commercial
31			Fachabitur also auf der	college<EspE> I wasn't
32			Hoeheren	interested at that
33			Handelsschule<EspE> das	time in the grammar
34			Gymnasium hat mich damals	school and I thought
35			nicht interessiert dann ich	<ESpB>why are they
36			habe dann ueberlegt	saying that? <ESp>we
37	→4	Esp	<ESp>warum sagen sie das?	don't want you to end
38	→5	Esp	<ESp>wir wollen nicht dass	as a girl on the till
39			du als KassiererIn	he said just like that
40			irgendwann endest sagte der	yeah I couldn't decide
41			so ja ich habe hin und her	
42			ueberlegt	

*Laleh* draws on the authoritative voices of her teachers here in an impressive play of dialogues in order to warrant the decision she made and the interpretation of its meaning which she is working here to establish as *her* biography. The examples of embedded speech (ESp) from →1-5 do not perform the function more frequently met with in this corpus (see again *Marie* at 4.4 or 4.5 where she proposes student solidarity as a counter discourse to the interviewer's agenda) of supporting open theorizing and the use of own discourse. Rather, here *Laleh* is proposing an institutional discourse to add weight to her own path and decisions. The significance within her learning biography of the role of the 'institution' school, is that it

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recognised her abilities and she learnt to listen to the institutional voices. Further, of course, the interest shown in her by the institution enhances her as a learner. This, too, in a certain sense is to use the shared discourse – education leads to betterment – to shape and give meaning to one's own learning biography.

Moving on, *Laleh* stayed on and had the chance to recognise how little information she had had and how grateful she felt to her teachers. In the meantime she was by her own report the best in her class and her teachers were reluctant to let her go. Her dream was to work in sales, in an office. Her reasons at the time were only partly in family and milieu. At →1 *Laleh* risks her face in proposing a potentially ridiculous source of inspiration, i.e. a notorious piece of mass culture. She has hedged her 'confession' significantly (lines 11 and 12) but ultimately insists on her own meaning-making here. Membership of a category of persons who might draw professional, career-moving inspiration from something as 'trivial' as a television soap opera is 'risky' because category membership may exclude shared understanding within the interview context. *Laleh* risks it, nevertheless.

*LALEH: THE COMMERCIAL BRANCH WAS MY DREAM*

**Extract 5.11**

- |    |      |                                  |                                       |
|----|------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1  | Lal: | ich weiss nicht auf welche ich   | <i>I don't know where I would</i>     |
| 2  |      | gegangen waere ich wollte ich    | <i>have gone I wanted I wanted to</i> |
| 3  |      | wollte in den kaufmaennischen    | <i>go into the commercial branch</i>  |
| 4  |      | Bereich das war mein Traum       | <i>that was my dream</i>              |
| 5  | R:   | warum?                           | <i>why?</i>                           |
| 6  | Lal: | uhm vielleicht ich habe das      | <i>uhm perhaps I was always so</i>    |
| 7  |      | immer so bewundert diese Filme   | <i>impressed by these films with</i>  |
| 8  |      | mit Imperien diese Holdings wie  | <i>empires holdings how business</i>  |
| 9  |      | da Geschaefte gemacht werden uhm | <i>is done uhm</i>                    |
| 10 | R:   | welche Filme?                    | <i>what films?</i>                    |
| 11 | Lal: | beispielsweise (.) das ist jetzt | <i>well for example (.) it's a</i>    |
| 12 | →1   | irgendwie lustig aber so DALLAS? | <i>bit funny perhaps but well</i>     |
| 13 |      | hat mich so imponiert? wie JR    | <i>DALLAS? always really</i>          |
| 14 |      | seine Geschaefte gemacht         | <i>impressed me? the way JR does</i>  |
|    |      |                                  | <i>his deals</i>                      |

The data threw up deeper and less expected motivations for career choice than just leaflets and television dramas, however, which highlighted the complexity of *Laleh*'s perception of this issue. Asked about the role models that were perhaps in her family or environment, additional intercultural and interdiscursive influences entered her narrative flow. Here the interviewer's conceptions of possible discursal aims are thrown wildly off course (→1). *Laleh* leaves no doubt about her reading of the

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influences that shaped her learning processes and drives her standpoint home. She is clearly adopting a critical stance to the proposed direction of the interviewer. Her utterance relies on an 'outside' discourse of such authority (i.e the Koran) that outright challenge by the interviewer would be clearly dispreferred. *Laleh's* constant orientation to authorities in her biographical constructions is once again illustrated clearly in this extract.

*LALEH: A RESPECTED OCCUPATION*

**Extract 5. 12**

1	Lal:	nein also sie wussten eigentlich	no they knew really, when I
2		wenn ich gesagt habe da	said 'I'm going to be a sales
3		<ESpB>ich will Kaufrau werden	clerk, 'eh? what's that
4		<ESpB>eh? was ist das denn?	then?' buyer salesperson
5		Kauffrau ist fuer die wenn man	that's for them even a
6		ueber- selbst auch <u>Haendler</u> und	merchant and in the old days
7		frueher hatten die die	they had the merchants who
8		Einkaeufer die auf dem Basaar	bought and sold cows at the
9		Kuehe oder so eingekauft und	bazaar they were in their
10		verkauft haben das war fuer sie	eyes the merchants
11		Haendler	
12	R:	ja genau	yeah right
13	Lal:	nee? und so das was hier war das	and this for them that wasn't
14		war fuer die kein=	really=
15	R:→1	=nicht unbedingt ehrliche Leute	=not really honest people
16	Lal:	ja ehrlich? nee bei uns muessen	yeah honest? no with us its
17		uhm	necessary uhm
18	R:	mhmm	mhmm
19	Lal:	weil das wissen Sie der Handel	because you know trade has
20		hat auch uhm so seine Funktion	also got uhm a function for
21		bekommen der Prophet war auch	us the Prophet was a merchant
22		ein Haendler er war ein Kaufmann	he was also a trader that's
23		deswegen wurde dieser Beruf auch	why this occupation was so
24		uhm sehr also hochgeschaeetzt der	respected it is you could do
25		ist da konnte man auch viel	a lot with it that is with
26		damit machen also mit diesem	this profession I that was
27		Beruf ich das war vielleicht	perhaps the example I
28		auch mit mein Vorbild der	followed the Prophet in part
29		Prophet teilweise er war	he was a very honest man you
30		naemlich ein sehr ehrlicher Mann	know

The actual experience in their respective apprenticeships - lasting each two and a half years - gave *Laleh* and *Sara* knowledge and self awareness: about themselves, about their chosen areas of work, and, most importantly perhaps, about the limitations of the prospects offered by a career after training. For *Laleh*, training did not dim the "Dallas"-effect of dreaming of running her own firm. For *Sara*, the dreams are not so clear, but the more general wishes are. *Sara* develops a consistent discourse in which security through training and practical learning are centre-staged. It is not implausible that this emphasis on the necessity of having '*Bodenhaftung*' (your feet

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on the ground) is employed here (→3) as a challenge to the interviewer-driven topic of learning as a *general good*. Certainly, Sara returns three times in this short extract to justify her interpretation of necessity. At →1 she uses the word 'Angst' (fear) in connection with the standard 'Elfenbeinturm' (ivory tower) metaphor and proposes the opposite study/growing up at →2 in a suggestion of inner speech, given here as <ESp>. Studying, she is arguing here, is deficient, if experience is the aim of learning. Sara's further talk seems to build up more defences against possible face-threatening responses in that she emphasizes with →4 her state of mind in the previous period of her learning biography and her fears once again of 'studying in no particular direction'. A more exact rendering of the German '*studierte ich da irgendwie in den blauen Dunst hinein*' (line 9), might be: '*I'd be studying sort of in the air*', with the literal translation of this fixed phrase being '*into the blue vapour*'. The choice of words is intentionally trivializing, it seems, and her further use of embedded speech is little short of self-ridicule ('*alles ist toll*'/'everything is great'). Sara warrants in this way her narrative of choice and establishes her resistance to the interviewer's agenda. At →5 the tone is altogether more sober and certain as to the *correctness* of what she decided to do. The choice of a commercial training is thus justified by her management of the arguments she played out years before. They can, I feel, be seen as staging devices or set pieces in a learning biography which rehearses these categories perhaps many times over in the attempt – here successful up to a point (see the coda at →6) – to explicate the choices an individual makes.

SARA: AN IVORY TOWER

Extract 5.13

1	SG:	mit welchem Ziel macht man das ja	what aim did I have? perhaps
2		uhm das klingt jetzt vielleicht	this sounds a little arrogant
3		ein bisschen ueberheblich aber	but after the Abitur I
4		ich habe gedacht nach dem Abitur	thought if I start to study
5		wenn ich dann sofort anfangen zu	straight away then I'll be
6		studieren dann bin ich irgendwo	somewhere I was always afraid
7	→1	da hatte ich immer Angst dass ich	that I would end up sitting
8		da im Elfenbeinturm sitze ich	in an ivory tower I used to
9	→2	habe gedacht <ESp>ich werde nie	think <Esp>I'll never really
10		richtig erwachsen ich wollte	grow up I wanted to really
11		wirklich mal uhm mal wirklich	see uhm what it is to go to
12		sehen wie das ist zu arbeiten ich	work I always wanted to study
13		wollte immer studieren aber ich	but I wanted to do this
14		wollte diese Ausbildung	training beforehand to get
15		zwischendurch machen um	some solid ground under my
16	→3	Bodenhaftung oder so was zu	feet or something I don't
17		behalten ich weiss nicht ich habe	know I thought <Esp>otherwise
18	→4	gedacht <ESp>sonst studiere ich	I'll just study in no



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19		da irgendwie in den blauen Dunst	particular direction and
20		hinein denke <ESp>alles ist toll	think <Esp>everything is
21		und komme dann in die Firma und	great and then I come into
22	→5	sehe dann die Realitaet und merke	the firm and see the reality
23		dann dass das nichts fuer mich	and realise that that's not
24		war das war fuer mich eine	for me! that was a test phase
25		Testphase da habe ich gedacht	for me I thought <Esp>good
26		<ESp>gut da mache ich die	I'll do the apprenticeship
27		Ausbildung und dann kann ich mich	and then I can decide "do I
28		entscheiden will ich dann vier	want to study business
29		Jahre oder fuenf Jahre Wirtschaft	studies for 4 or 5 years or
30	→6	studieren oder nicht? das Problem	not? the problem was I had
31	coda	war nur dass ich dann die	done the training and I still
32		Ausbildung gemacht habe und immer	didn't know whether I should
33		noch nicht genau wusste ob ich	

*Carola* reflects on the motivations behind her choices of training, study and choice of study direction. Contained within her densely packed autobiographical sketch of her first learning choices, the motivation for them, and the realisation of the gap in her knowledge about what awaited her at university, are characteristic self-dialogue markers of individual choice and consciousness, functioning as signposts for retrospective interpretation of prior modes of thought (→1); perceptions of how learning 'should be' (→2) are overshadowed by the brutal/self mocking use of the scanner metaphor (→3); and a counter-discourse of a collaborative, individual learning style is established (→4 and 5). The structuring underlines the position of protest *Carola* takes up.

*CAROLA: 'I JUST FEEL LIKE A SCANNER ...'*

Extract 5. 14

1	CO:	uhm es ist halt die Sache dass	uhm the thing is more or less
2		wenn man noch nicht an eine	that when you're not yet at a
3		Universitaet ist (1.0) weiss man	university (1.0) you never
4		nie wie es in einem Fach ist man	know what a subject's like you
5		weiss nicht wie es zugeht dass	don't know how it works you
6		lernt man erst wenn man drinnen	learn that only when you're
7		ist und bei mir war das so ich	doing it and in my case well I
8		hab eine kaufmaennische ich hab	did a commercial first of all
9		erst mal Realschule gemacht war	I finished secondary school I
10		sechzehn hab dann eine Ausbildung	was 16 then I did my training
11		gemacht weil ich halt nicht mehr	because I didn't want to go to
12		zur Schule gehen wollte es war	school anymore it was too much
13		mir zu viel ja nach zehn Jahren	for me like after 10 years and
14		und hab dann eigentlich gemerkt	then I noticed that the work
15		dass mich die Arbeit gelangweilt	was boring and I didn't feel
16		hat und ich mich untergefordert	really stimulated at all so I
17		vorgekommen bin und hab ich mir	said to myself <ESp>ok I'll
18	→1	gesagt <ESp> also ok probiere aus	try out AS levels and if that
19		Fachabitur zu machen und wenn das	goes ok I'll go to university
20		gut klappt dann studiere und das	and I passed the exams with
21		Fachabitur hab ich als beste	the best mark and so I went to
22		abgeschlossen und bin dann halt	university and I thought
23		zur Universitaet gegangen hatte	<ESp>there I'll get it'll be
24	→2	da auch mir gedacht <ESp> dass	good for my brain I can work

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25	ist halt es gibt mir was fuer	<i>how I want and get on and read</i>
26	mein Kopf ich kann halt fuer mich	<i>a load of things think what I</i>
27	arbeiten und weiterkommen und	<i>want but what I see is that in</i>
28	viele Sachen lesen meine eigene	<i>economics I'm not stimulated</i>
29	Gedanken machen und sehe	<i>at all during the first part I</i>
30	eigentlich dass es in Wirtschaft	<i>just learnt everything by</i>
31	nicht gefordert ist im	<i>heart I was really frustrated</i>
32	Grundstudium hab ich nur	<i>just wanted to pack up because</i>
33	auswendig gelernt sehr frustriert	<i>I just feel like a scanner I</i>
34	und wollte eigentlich vorher das	<i>reckoned I had scanned a load</i>
35	Studium schon abbrechen weil ich	<i>of stuff scanned it in me in</i>
36	→3 mir eigentlich vorkomme wie ein	<i>and do the exam (1.0) and</i>
37	Scanner ich hab gedacht ich hab	<i>after a month or so</i>
38	ein Haufen gescannt alles rein	<i>everything's forgotten then</i>
39	schreibe die Klausur (1.0) und	<i>into the next exam and the</i>
40	nach einem Monat ist das Wissen	<i>next I didn't reckon much on</i>
41	abgetaucht in die naechste	<i>that (1.0) because I'd learnt</i>
42	Klausur die naechste Sache das	<i>everything and then like all</i>
43	fand ich eigentlich nicht sehr	<i>the information just goes</i>
44	sinnvoll (1.0) weil ich hatte	<i>again when the next exam comes</i>
45	dann halt die Sachen schon mal	<i>round and you have to do it</i>
46	gehört oder so das Wissen taucht	<i>(1.0) and I didn't like that</i>
47	ab wenn man das Naechste machen	<i>much so then I registered for</i>
48	muss und (1.0) das hat mir nicht	<i>Sociology and went to a</i>
49	mehr gefallen dann hab mich fuer	<i>seminar about Egoism and</i>
50	→4 Sowi eingeschrieben und in einem	<i>Reason and that sort of</i>
51	Seminar ueber Egoismus und	<i>motivated me so that I could</i>
52	Vernunft besucht und das hat mich	<i>go to economics lectures again</i>
53	in so fern wieder motiviert als	<i>and in the meantime I just</i>
54	dass ich mich dann in die VWL	<i>about manage to survive</i>
55	wieder setzen konnte und ja	<i>economics but only because</i>
56	mittlerweile Wiwi durchhalte aber	<i>I've got this Sociology course</i>
57	nur weil ich diese	<i>to compensate for everything</i>
58	Soziologiestudium hab um das	<i>because like I've got other</i>
59	irgendwie zu kompensieren weil	<i>things to think about where I</i>
60	ich halt andere Sachen hab wo ich	<i>can sit in seminars and</i>
61	in Seminaren sitzen mit Leuten	<i>discuss with others where I</i>
62	→5 diskutieren kann wo ich wirklich	<i>can really think for myself</i>
63	eigenstaendig denken kann sonst	<i>otherwise I wouldn't be able</i>
64	koennte ich das mittlerweile	<i>to hold out</i>
65	nicht durchhalten	

The sections of interview narrative given above are rich in lexical, syntactic and prosodic characteristics which perform important discursive functions. A significant part of the work these students are doing in relating meaningful biographical stories is the handling of different and frequently conflicting versions of the learning experience they are or have been participants in.

## Summary

Demonstrating evidence of identity construction through 'biographization', including the building of an academic identity as part of a life-story was the central task of this chapter. The work *Marie* and the other student respondents do in the interview extracts analysed here combines in an intricate way the discourse functions of the learning biography: identity and self are proposed within a biographized framework

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and discourses of knowledge and learning are accounted for by reference to events in the life world of the student. Further, the student's discourses are contextualized through association with membership categories which themselves are grounded in the significant speech of self and others.

The workings of interdiscursivity as evidence of the employment and deployment of discourses of learning appear in the consistent recourse to others' talk in the form of embedded speech. In- and out-of-frame speech is shown to perform both the function of developing a counter discourse to the interviewer's 'institutional' agenda and of supporting open theorizing (i.e. the use of own discourse). At the same time, embedded speech is shown (see, above all, *Laleh*) to function also as a staging device within a coherent learning biography, proposing institutional discourse(s) to warrant the significance within the learning biography of a respondent's choices and knowledge claims.

Category membership is shown, too, to function within the construction of identity in talk as a contextualizing resource, making it possible for knowledge claims and learning discourses to be grounded in shared understandings of learning processes.

In the next chapter, the workings of embedded speech and the 'conversationalizing' of discourse is looked at more closely. In addition, the particular role of prosody, hedging and modality in the production of warranted learning biographies is examined.

## Chapter 6: Competing discourses, interdiscursivity, and prosody (The Corpus 2)

Discourse is a practice, a practice embedded in an immediate context – here the interaction of the research interview – and in a range of other practices, linguistic, emotional, conceptual, and so on. It is "a way of talking about and acting upon the world which both constructs and is constructed by a set of social practices" (Candlin and Maley, 1997: 202). While one moment of the discursive practices of HE students will be characterised by the acquisition and socialisation into the professional, academic discourses of the university, another important feature of learning practices and knowledge acquisition is the exploitation of alternative discourses, associated with quite disparate social practices. These may include rival or related professional 'disciplines' (e.g. educationalists' use of linguistics), political, economic, aesthetic, sports, psychoanalytical, or indeed any imaginable and exploitable resources of language and social practice. This interdiscursivity, manifest and implicit (Ivanic, 1997: 47-48) is observable as a shift of "*footing*" (Goffman, 1981: 124-139), a change of perspective, in the middle of a stretch of dialogue, transforming the voice of the speaker or requesting/urging the co-speaker to move their own perspective. As we have seen already, further interactive resources include the resort to others' voices in direct quoted or indirect reported speech, embedded in the flow of discursive narrative of the interview. Goffman has provided us with suggestive analytical concepts here, too: alongside *embedding*, he refers to *layering* and *laminating* of speech performances (Goffman, 1981: 153-54). Prosodic devices, too, including intonation change, exaggeration, ironising detachment, or mimicry (for examples from the realm of humour see Günthner, Christmann, and Kotthoff in Kotthoff, [ed] 1996) may be an important vehicle of such discourse shift. Another is the "conversationalization" of discourse. Fairclough uses 'conversationalism' as a social and institutional phenomenon – as a superficially anti-elitist roll-back of traditionalist practices in order to replace them with discursive practices more fitted to a 'mass'

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society and the unprecedented importance of mass language media (Fairclough, 1995c: 258-259). By contrast, I have already introduced the term here to describe the internal dialogues and snatches of reported speech employed for various purposes inside dialogic exchanges (see Günthner, 1997: 179-180 for her justification of the use of 'complaint stories' as examples of 'everyday narrative' and generally for a number of key analytical instruments I shall be using below). Above all, as I have already sought to illustrate in the analysis of *Marie's* interview in Chapter 4, the shift into conversational mode represents the insertion or irruption into stretches of discourse of others' voices, template-like points of view, alternative perspectives, rhetorical models. The use of such layering of speech underlines the organisation and elegance of the most unassuming flows of speech.

***Embedded speech, layering and "laminating" – a 'plausibility' device?***

An extension of embedding in speech and a facet of such discursual practices as hedging and modality is the concept Goffman uses to describe the layers upon layers that are seemingly an "essential outcome of the production process in speaking": 'lamination' (1981: 153-4). The data on embedding in the corpus certainly justifies Goffman's belief that the frameworks in which words are spoken "pass far beyond ordinary conversation". Sharing his glee, one might say, in the workings of footing in spoken interaction, it is possible to see in the layering taking place within and without the interview frame (e.g. *Laleh's* recourse to Dallas and Mohammed within a few words; *Carola's* use of Sartre and sublimated family affections) his view that talk "frivolously embeds, insets, and intermingles" (Goffman, 1981: 154-5). The impression created by this 'laminating' is perhaps superficially 'frivolous', the discourse work being performed in the life story, however, is a product of manifest interdiscursivity and the plying between different currents of experience enacted by the students in this 'discourse work' uses this sometimes startling lamination in the conversationalization of meaning. Reciprocity and solidarity is generated (or, as in the case of *Carola's* account of her family life, aggression). The exact meaning of the layered accounts may not be entirely clear to the listener, but their discursual aim is broadly tailored syntactically, semantically and pragmatically for comprehension: it is an act of communicative "ritualization" (Schiffrin, 1993: 258).

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The shift into the voices or positions occupied by others is employed in different ways by each of the student respondents (see Appendix 1 for a complete list of the use of embedding), yet these changes of 'footing' are for the most part closely bound up with the process of autobiographical reflexion discussed already. *Laleh* reproduces predominantly the speech of teachers, her mother and other figures of authority; *Carola*, too, embeds scenes from her family life, yet she shifts almost as frequently to internal dialogue, similarly to *Sara*, debating with herself about her decisions and options. There are interesting variations in emphasis, however, between these three young women and *Marie's* employment of embedded speech as a plausibility device which was examined in greater detail in Chapter 4 above. *Laleh's* deference to authority is intimately linked to the importance of decisions *external* to her on her school career and exit from the 'ghetto' (see, for example, Extracts 5.5 and 5.6 above) she, as a young Turkish girl felt herself to be in. The encouragement of teachers is abetted by the important support of her mother, and is ranged together with the words of the Koran teacher and the Prophet himself, while the implied indifference or fatalism of the father is rendered less unequivocally, yet is verbally overruled by the energy given to the speech of the mother. While *Laleh* narrates her way through educational establishments with no little pride, it is undeniable that the discourse she develops here is presented as the work of 'higher' bodies than herself, and deference and group solidarity are given strong expression. For *Laleh*, the use of reported speech in an intrinsically narrative fashion, is predominantly other-oriented: that is, reference is invariably to an 'authority' such as her mother, teachers, her father, the boss.

Both *Sara* and *Carola*, by contrast, seem more isolated and considerably more introspective in their verbalisation of self. *Sara's* embedding of speech is very much a mirror of her own searchings for a way out of an educational context which presented itself to her as over-simple and seductively easy, as we saw above (Extracts 5.8 and 5.12). In introspective dialogues, she moves towards decisions and choices, negotiating learning at school and in training as she makes her way. For her, the dialogue is frequently resolute, performing a function within her learning narratives of highlighting a decision taken. As such they represent a knowledge claim or experience claim, and have epistemic value.

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*Carola*, while reconstructing internal moments of decision and determination to succeed and go on with school or study, devotes a significant amount of attention in the recounting of her progress, as she narrates her story (see for example Extracts 6.5 and 6.6 below.), from shy, conservative young girl to self-confident, critical university student to the travails of home life, in particular with regard to the standing of 'learning' and 'intellectualism' as opposed to money, clothes and food, and to her struggle to break out of this constricting context. Given the significant use of embedding - jumping from 'in-frame' to 'out-of-frame' speech (Schiffrin, 1993: 252-3) - by the female respondents examined here, it is remarkable how unimportant by comparison this discursual practice seems to be for the *male* students included in this corpus. A possible reason for this disparity may lie in the discursual function of frequent embedding as a type of 'exploratory' (i.e. valuable) talk. As we shall see below, this type of discursual practice may be felt to be non-status-enhancing (*Marie* in Extract 6.1 or *Sara* in 5.13 are good examples of this) and over participatory, inviting participant solidarity in a way considered indiscreet or unfitting for the context of the research interview. *Özlem*, however, as will be shown, resembles in her employment of embedded speech and open theorizing more the practices of the male students included here. This is an important deviant case finding which within the present corpus supports the careful conclusions drawn from the otherwise overwhelmingly consistent use of embedded speech as 'valuable talk'. Attention to deviant case evidence reminds us of the limits *and* possibilities of low-inference data analysis.

*Henry* and *Torsten* remain decidedly factual. Another instance it may be plausibly asserted of the difference in operation between the already 'authoritative' voice of 'valued talk' and the more openly self-revelatory, explorative claims of 'valuable talk' as developed in various ways by the women respondents.

*Marie's* embedded speech opens up moments of empowerment. It breaches the interpersonal interaction of the interview and points out to the contiguous environments of experience. *Marie*, as we saw convincingly in Chapter 4, employs the extended resources of layered discourses as a **plausibility device**. This means, she turns to the voices of significant others, to her own other-oriented or self-oriented

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voice, and to less easily recognisable or definable words in order to ground her talk and work up open theories of her learning and self.

The main feature of the first extract in this chapter is the skilful accomplishment of meaning in talk by the orchestration within an unfolding biographical narrative of different voices and the discourses – discourses of learning, affective discourses of self – they transport.

MARIE: NARRATIVE - LEARNING BACKGROUND, FAMILY, STUDYING

[Ab = 'abstract', Or = 'orientation', Co = 'complication', Ev = 'evaluation', Re = 'resolution', 'coda']

Extract 6. 1

1	Ab	M:	.hhh ich kann nur fuer mich	.hhh I can only speak for
2			sprechen? uh:mm (1.0) ich ko:mm	myself? U:hmm (1.0) I don't
3			also ueberhaupt nicht aus einem	co:me from an academic
4	Or		Akademikerhaushalt ich bin die	background at all I'm the
5			erste? ueberhaupt die an der Uni	first? ever to be at the uni?
6			ist? meine Eltern waren nie im	my parents never went abroad?
7			Ausland? .hh fuer die waren die	.hh for them these things were
8	Co		Dinge ungewoehnlich aber sie	unusual but they never said
9			haben nie gesagt uhm (2.0)	uhm (2.0) ((tongue click))
10		→1	((tongue click)) <EspB>das finden	<EspB>we don't approve of you
11			wir nicht gut dass du das oder	doing that instead they said
12			das machen wuerdest sondern wenn	if you want to do it but if
13			du das machen moechtest aber wenn	you're really sure that its
14			du dir wirklich sicher bist dass	good for you do it<EspE> (1.0)
15			es gut fuer dich ist dann mach	uh::m but it wa::s he wouldn't
16			es<EspE> (1.0) uh::m aber es	have ever come and said
17	Co		wa::r er waere jetzt nie gekommen	<EspB>why aren't you going?
18		→2	<EspB>warum gehst du denn nicht?	Abroad it was the other way
19			ins Ausland sondern es war ja	around <EspB>I'd like to do
20		→3	andersherum <EspB>ich moechte das	that (?) I'd like to go to
21			(?) machen ich moechte gerne nach	Spain <EspB>yes but why
22	Co	→4	Spanien <EspB>ja aber warum	Spai:n? and then there were
23			Spa:nien? und dann wurde	questions <Esp>why what for
24		→5	hinterfragt <ESp>wieso weshalb	how come (.) .hh ((tongue
25			warum (.) .hh ((tongue click))	click))and <EspB>is it really
26		→6	und <EspB>ist es denn wirklich	ne:cessary? and and say YES?
27	Co		notwe:ndig? und und sag JA? .hh	.hh and then and then the
28			und dann dann macht die	support (1.0) but and I've got
29			Unterstuetzung (1.0) aber und ich	another fellow student or
30			hab eine andere Kommilitonin oder	girlfriend for example that's
31	Or	→7	Freundin das ist zum Beispiel hab	it was my experience kids who:
32			ich die Erfahrung gemacht Kinder	who came from rich homes and
33	Or	Rep	die: die aus reichen Haushalten	families like that they're
34			kommen und solchen Fami:lien die	sent in the eleventh school
35			werden im elften im elften	year to America so that they
36			Schuljahr nach Amerika geschickt	can study there for a year and
37			damit die da ein Jahr studieren	they come back with a
38			und die kommen schon mit einem	completely different horizon
39	Re		ganz anderen Horizont zurueck	

Marie is, she says, the first in her family to attend a university. Hers was not a family of academics ('Akademikerhaushalt'), nor were they wealthy (33). Neither did they



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have any experience of going abroad. All the more interesting, then, is her decision to take a year out of her university studies to study in Spain, in Malaga, and *Marie* returns to the reasons and the effects of this study choice repeatedly, an indication of how important it is for her sense of self and for her standing in the institutional encounter of the interview. Yet this extract illustrates how *Marie* goes about constructing the biographical shell for this crucial event in her life-world. It shows, in fact, how hard she works to build up an array of 'proofs' that she has acted independently (→3), has shaped her decisions alone and without the informed help of family or friends. and, most importantly of all, that she has done all this in full awareness that such a claim is potent and in some ways dispreferred in the context of the institutional interview encounter. To claim to have chosen her path consciously and in opposition to the 'norm' (the majority who go nowhere and the minority who have their way smoothed for them by money and experience), means to make a knowledge claim that challenges the class, gender and scientific norm of the university. Haas's remarks on precisely this point have already been referred to more than once (Haas, 1999: 234). Such a self-consciously confident discourse of learning must be fought for, and *Marie* seems to be doing precisely that in this extract.

From the point of view of the 'shell' of this narrative, the most notable feature is its closed, circular structure. *Marie* abstracts her story with a list of mitigating factors tending to downgrade the knowledge claim she is essentially required to make by the interviewer (1-8). Her opening may be heard as an offer of a 'self-disqualifier'. If she can only speak for herself, then, in institutional terms her talk has little to offer, or so her utterance may plausibly be construed (1-2). The central section of this extract contains the 'set piece' of this improvised draft of a learning biography: the staged, affectively managed out-of-frame dialogue between *Marie* and her parents (→1-6). The resolution of the extract is the opposite of what it began with: the other case, the negative membership category which serves to enhance *Marie's* 'otherness' (i.e. the 'privileged' who return from abroad with a completely new 'horizon' - lines 33-39).

It goes without saying that the management of a dialogue which takes place in another time and place is marked by appropriate prosodic devices that re-create the immediacy of the talk embedded here. In fact, at →1 we seem to be hearing *Marie's*

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reluctance or indecision about the idea of stepping out of frame to enter a different discursual context. The relatively 'sober', factual mitigation of her opening remarks falters at ➔1 and is overcome prosodically (2.0 second pause plus the - for *Marie* – characteristic self-conscious tongue-clicking) as she enters into the dialogue with her parents. A plausible interpretation of this faltering and prosodic overlaying might see the reported opinions of her parents (whom she has more or less disqualified from being authorities on the subject of learning and learning abroad immediately prior to this move) as trivial or at least purely anecdotal. The research interview is felt to require more weighty talk, perhaps. Yet she does in fact broach the dialogue and proposes it with a kind of accomplished panache as she skilfully shifts tone and rhythm. At ➔2, 4, 5 and 6 we hear the arguments of the parents as presented to us through *Marie's* words. For herself, she reserves only one conversational turn at ➔3, where she simply declares her decision to study abroad. For her parents' talk she devotes space and effort to make it clear to her audience that though a foil to her own determination, their words are to be received generally positively. They could offer support for her own better judgement, if not knowledgeable advice (➔1).

At ➔7, however, the discourse she is composing on the topic of study abroad changes gear and context once again as she first begins to raise the anecdotal evidence of a girl friend's experience only to enact a prompt self-repair – marking a reappraisal of the epistemic weight of the talk she wishes to carry forward here – by switching from anecdote to 'experience' she has made in relation to well-off children of academics. A switch, therefore, from a more subjective discourse that might be considered unqualified, to a more generalised, more 'sociologically' warranted interpretation that addresses the interviewer's topic in a serious fashion, in tune with the tenor of the institutional encounter.

### **'Conversationalization'**

In the following three samples, seamless transitions between narrative and purportedly verbatim speech or internal speeches are given. The 'frivolous embedding' Goffman speaks of seems effortless. Cardinal learning experiences are framed and (re-)constructed and inserted into an interview narrative, jumping any number of hurdles in time and place. The discourse of learning 'tapped' in each case

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establishes a sense of continuity of self or of understanding, and can be read as a moment of reflexion on the (narrated) present.

CAROLA: "I NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT IT"

Extract 6. 2

1	CO:	ich hatte in der Realschule einen	in the secondary school I had
2		Durchschnitt von drei komma fuenf	an average of 3.5 was really
3	→MP	war eigentlich sehr schlecht (.) und	pretty bad and I just couldn't
4	→MP	ich hatte einfach keine Lust es war	be bothered anymore it was
5		so ein Zwang da dass ich zur Schule	just this pressure there that
6	→MP	gehen musste und ich hab +einfach	I had to go to school and I
7		Nichts gemacht++ (.) ich hab dort	just did nothing (.) I never
8		nicht in Erwaegung gezogen dass ich	thought that I wasn't perhaps
9		vielleicht nicht dumm bin ich dachte	so stupid I thought more like
10	→Esp	also eher so <ESp>ich kann nicht so	<ESp>I can't do so much I'll
11		viel mache ich meine Lehre ich hab	do an apprenticeship I didn't
12		gar nicht mir kam es gar nicht in	I never even thought ((bangs
13	→Pro	den Sinn ((bangs on table)) auch mal	on table)) of going to a
14		ins Museum zu gehen ins Theater zu	museum to the theatre or
15	→MP	gehen irgendwie ein gutes Buch zu	something like read a good
16		lesen kam mir nicht in den Sinn	book just didn't think of it

The flow of the narrative, which is prosodically driven by repeated modal devices (→MP) 'eigentlich'/'really', 'einfach'/'just', 'einfach'/'just', 'irgendwie'/'like' and by the affective table-banging (→Pro), is enriched and warranted by the →ESp insertion. The frame is shifted, *Carola's* position is asserted.

LALEH: YOU'RE WASTED HERE!

Extract 6. 3

1	Lal:	das hat man gemerkt als wir uhm ich	we saw that when we uhm I was at
2		war ein Jahr auf der Hauptschule die	the secondary modern for a year
3	→SR	Lehrerin hat dann auch gesagt meine	the (woman) teacher said to me
4	→Esp	Lehrerin sagte <ESp>du bist zu	she my teacher said <ESp>you are
5		schade fuer diese Schule Wechsel sie	too good for this school send
6		auf die Realschule um und ich bin	her to the comprehensive uhm and
7		dann rueber ich habe meine Eltern	I went over and I had to
8		ueberreden muessen mein Vater war	convince my parents my father at
9		erstmal nicht dafuer Da hat die	first he was against it the
10		Lehrerin noch mit ihm persoendlich	teacher she spoke to him
11		gesprochen	personally

Here, too, the teacher's authoritative words are framed (→ESp) to drive the narrative account. The self-repair at →SR is interesting. *Laleh* transforms 'die Lehrerin'/'the teacher' into 'meine Lehrerin'/'my teacher' (2-3). Thus the weight and affective significance of the significant other's speech brought to the aid of her learning biography is meaningfully enhanced.

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The third example has already been discussed in Chapter 5 in Extract 5.10. Once again it is *Laleh*, and the easy flow in and out of dialogue, in and out of speech and thought as well (→4 and 5) constructs a solid grounding for the direction *Laleh* is taking her narrative biography. The other-orientedness of *Laleh*'s use of embedded speech is richly illustrated by the attention and detail she devotes to the speech of others.

**LALAH: "WHY ARE THEY SAYING THAT?"**

**Extract 6.4**

1		Lal:	ja als ich die zehnte beendet	yeah when I finished the
2			hatte habe ich mich beworben ich	tenth I put in applications
3			wollte eine Ausbildung haben	I wanted an apprenticeship
4			machen mein Traum war damals	my dream then was to be an
5			Industriekauffrau oder	industrial sales clerk or
6			Grosshandelskauffrau Buerokauffrau	in wholesale or in an
7			und damals war das sehr	office it was difficult
8			problematisch mit den	then to get a place and
9			Ausbildungsplaetzen und dann hatte	then I got an offer it was
10			ich dann ein Angebot bekommen es	for a training post in
11			war Grosshandelskauffrau in einer	wholesale in a drinks
12			Getraenkefirma in einem so	company and I told my
13			Grosshandel war das und dann habe	teachers <ESp>yeah so I've
14	→1	Esp	ich den Lehrern erzahlt <ESp>ja	got a training place after
15			so habe ich eine Ausbildungsstelle	the tenth and then
16	→2	Esp	nach der zehnten und dann <ESp>ja	<ESp>where then? the
17			wo? die Lehrer haben sich darueber	teachers found out more
18			informiert was das fuer ein Job	what kind of job that was
19			ist und so da kam sie zu mir und	then they came to me and
20	→3	Esp	haben gesagt <EspB>Laleh ich	said <Esp>Laleh, I wouldn't
21			wuerde dir empfehlen mach das	recommend that stay on at
22			nicht geh weiter auf die Schule du	school you could make much
23			koenntest aus dir viel mehr machen	more of yourself go to
24			mach Gymnasium oder oder	grammar school or do the
25			Fachabitur also auf der Hoeheren	GVNQ or go to the
26			Handelsschule<EspE>das Gymnasium	commercial college<EspE> I
27			hat mich damals nicht interessiert	wasn't interested at that
28			dann ich habe dann ueberlegt	time in the grammar school
29	→4	Esp	<EspB>warum sagen sie das?	and I thought <EspB>why are
30	→5	Esp	<EspB>wir wollen nicht dass du als	they saying that? <EspB>we
31			KassiererIn irgendwann endest	don't want you to end as a
32			sagte der so ja ich habe hin und	girl on the till he said
33			her ueberlegt	just like that yeah I
				couldn't decide

**Prosody and discourse**

Reference has already been made to prosodic effects in speech. These refer specifically to those 'staging' devices used to heighten the dramatic significance of utterances. They may include hyperbolic use of adverbs or quantifiers, vowel-lengthening and rising-falling tone as markers of indignation, surprise, etc., positive or negative affective marking of lexis, inclusive-exclusive use of direct or indirect

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speech. These prosodic elements of the students' discourse may aim to engender solidarity with the speaker or with absent others, to heighten conversational reciprocity as an approach to greater understanding, or alternatively to enhance the speaker's status or authority (Günthner, 1997: 189-192). One passage from the data presents an interesting example of the dramatic staging of the speaker's position vis-à-vis an alternative - and opposed - order of discourse. *Carola* builds up a powerful frame of prosodic language in recounting the work involved in breaking out of her family's influence:

CAROLA: MASSIVE PROBLEMS

Extract 6.5

1	CO:	ich hatte drei Wochen massive	<i>I had really massive problems for</i>
2		Probleme aber (.) meine Mutter	<i>three weeks but (.) my mother never</i>
3		hat nie mit mir darueber	<i>talked to me about it never asked</i>
4		gesprochen mich nie gefragt	<i>me &lt;Esp&gt;what's the matter? she</i>
5	→1	<ESp>was ist? sie hat gesehen wie	<i>could see what I looked like::: (.)</i>
6		ich ausgesehen habe (.) aber es	<i>but all she was worried about was</i>
7		gab nur halt die Sorge so (.)	<i>(.) always just food and because</i>
8		immer das Essen und weil man	<i>somehow it just wasn't possible to</i>
9		irgendwie ueber Gefuehle und	<i>speak about feelings and things</i>
10	→2	dergleichen nicht ((strikes	<i>like that ((strikes table)) (.) not</i>
11		table)) reden konnte (.) auch	<i>even ((strikes table)) in any way</i>
12	→3	nicht ((strikes table)) ueber	<i>even about how you feel (.)</i>
13		irgendwie das Befinden (.) gar	<i>absolutely nothing</i>
14		{nicht	
15	R:	mhm}	
16	CO:	=und deswegen ist es bei meinen	<i>and that's why with my parents it's</i>
17		Eltern halt so es muss einfach	<i>just like it is everything has to</i>
18		alles geordnet sein (.) die	<i>have its place::: (.) the</i>
19		Nachbarn ((strikes table)) die	<i>neighbours ((strikes table))</i>
20	→4	muessen denken ((strikes table))	<i>they've got to think ((strikes</i>
21	→5	dass alles ok ist (.) man muss	<i>table)) that everything's just fine</i>
22		gepflegt aussehen (1.0) und Geld	<i>(.) you've got to look smart (1.0)</i>
23		ist sehr wichtig (.) kann man	<i>and money is really important (.)</i>
24		sich Essen kaufen und Kleidung	<i>you can buy yourself food and</i>
25		(.) und ein Auto (.) {es sehen	<i>clothes (.) and a car (.) {the</i>
26			<i>neighbours see</i>
27	R:	{???	
28	CO:	=doch auch die Nachbarn und uhm	<i>everything and uhm uhm it's just a</i>
29	→6	es ist einfach ein System was ich	<i>system of things that I (1.0) I</i>
30		(1.0) eigentlich was ich	<i>think it's really not important</i>
31		sekundaer finde	

*Carola* here employs a thick web of modal adverbs ('halt', 'eigentlich'/'kind of', 'actually') and moves through hesitations and an obvious search for the 'texture' of the complaints still in her ears to a damning (and accomplishedly rhetorical) list of commandments punctuated by her peremptory emotional raps on the table top (made loud by a mass of heavy rings) which provide a percussory accompaniment to the telling (→2-5). She completes this biographized vignette with a personal crescendo

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of triumph and self-confirmation (→6). Interestingly, at→1 she proposes the parental concern and interest that never came in the form of an imagined utterance, another fascinating employment of layering and laminating. Context is created and *potential* discourse is roughed in.

In the next Extract, *Carola* fills out the negative picture of her home and family life and its role in hindering her development and ultimately its place in her learning and personal achievement with the help of emphatic table banging (→1, →3). More importantly, at →2 *Carola* searches for a formulation for her own conception of values and aims to confront the affectively difficult one left imprinted in her talk by the home. She finds her way to this at →2 with the long drawn-out resolution ('*wie wie wie*'/'like like like') of finishing something you start ('*durchgezogen wie wie wie man einfach alles zu Ende fuehrt*'/'finshed like like like you simply finish things'). Like she will finish her studies, too, she asserts. This is a significant use of affective marking to establish an own – hard-won – learning discourse and she leaves no doubt about its importance for her.

CAROLA: YOU FINISH SOMETHING YOU'VE STARTED

Extract 6.6

- |    |     |                                  |                                 |
|----|-----|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1  | R:  | ja aber wenn man dann Geld fuer  | yeah, but if you go and spend   |
| 2  |     | Buecher von Sartre oder so was   | money on books by Sartre or the |
| 3  |     | ausgibt                          | like ...                        |
| 4  | CO: | das ist Unsinn (.) das ist       | but that's rubbish (.) that's   |
| 5  |     | Unsinn (.) ich kann mich daran   | rubbish (.) I can remember (.)  |
| 6  |     | erinnern das (.) wenn ein Buch   | when a book of mine lay on the  |
| 7  |     | von mir im Zimmer vor meinem     | floor in my bedroom I used to   |
| 8  |     | Bett lag da wurde ich            | get screamed at because (.) uhm |
| 9  |     | angeschrieen weil (.) uhm es     | nothing was allowed to lie      |
| 10 |     | darf nichts rumliegen (.) es     | around on the floor (.) not     |
| 11 | →1  | darf auch kein Buch [strikes     | even a book was allowed [bangs  |
| 12 |     | table] vor dem Bett liegen was   | table] to lie next to the bed   |
| 13 |     | man liest oder so was (.) weiss  | if you're reading it or         |
| 14 |     | ich nicht es war (.) so dass     | anything like that (.) I don't  |
| 15 |     | meine Eltern haben auch nicht so | know it was (.) my parents      |
| 16 |     | viel gelesen wie es              | never really read that much     |
|    |     |                                  | like                            |
| 17 | R:  | {ok aber es                      | ok but that is                  |
| 18 | CO: | wurde also so}                   | so it was like that             |
| 19 | R:  | das ist was wir erfahren alle    | that's what we all experience   |
| 20 |     | (.) relativ normal (.) wie war   | (.) relatively normal (.) what  |
| 21 |     | es dann beim in der waehrend der | was it like then during your    |
| 22 |     | Ausbildungsstelle wo Sie dann    | apprenticeship when you began   |
| 23 |     | angefangen haben sich zu aendern | to change (.) because after all |
| 24 |     | (.) weil schließlich Sie waren   | you'd been there two years you  |
| 25 |     | schon zwei Jahre dort Sie hatten | must have had some kind of      |
| 26 |     | bestimmt ein gewisse Routine da  | routine there and then suddenly |
| 27 |     | aufgebaut und dann ploetzlich    | they (.) the world begins to    |

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28	fangen die (.) faengt die Welt	
29	an sich	
30	CO: ich hab' das einfach ich hab'	<i>I just I just (.) did it like</i>
31	das einfach (.) durchgezogen wie	<i>like like you just finish</i>
32	→2 wie wie man einfach alles zu	<i>something you've started</i>
33	Ende fuehrt was man anfangen	<i>exactly like the way I going to</i>
34	hat genauso wie ich jetzt mein	<i>finish my business admin degree</i>
35	Wiwistudium auch beende	<i>[bangs table]</i>
36	→3 ((strikes table))	

## Modality and hedging - The language of learning discourses

Reference has already been frequently made in the data Extracts analysed so far to the use of modal particles, modal adverbs, and hedging. *Carola*, in the Extract above, layers her narrative with approximations, hesitations, hedging qualifications and silences. This active negotiation of meaning through circumlocution is the site where the speakers' mutual relationship is established and where positions of certainty, opinion, belief and factuality are adopted. Stubbs defines modality as

"the ways in which language is used to encode meanings such as degrees of certainty and commitment, or alternatively vagueness and lack of commitment, personal beliefs versus generally accepted or taken for granted knowledge. Such language functions to express group membership, as speakers adopt positions, express agreement or disagreement with others ..." (1996: 202).

Modality is the 'interpersonal' dimension of discourse (Fairclough, 1992a: 158) operating in the zone between introspection and definition of affinity, personal, objective or discursual. In the present corpus, modality and hedging devices pinpoint the discursual position of the speakers in their transition from discursive construction of identity in their learning autobiographies to knowledge claims within specific discursive spheres or 'communities' (e.g. work, university).

## Modality

The Corpus Searches below display separately for *Carola* and *Torsten* their use of a selection of common modal verbs. *Carola* develops a portrait of inescapable necessities, peppered with the force of 'must', 'had to', 'necessary' and colours the hard necessities she is talking about as injustice, bureaucracy and mindless rote

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learning. Her complaint is with Professors' requirements (5, 44); the strictures of repeated (failed) exams (6, 13); rote learning (19, 20, 45); and she suggests ideal possibilities with emphatic 'could be' (23), or voices sharp criticism of the state of learning affairs (10, 12). The regime of academic learning, thus, is coloured modally through verbs of necessity and force. Looking back to her origins, into her biography, and forwards again in time to her aspirations, *Carola* employs verbs of possibility ('*koennen*/'*koennten*') which serve as an alternative discourse of learning potential she evidently refuses to relinquish (23, 27, 52, 55, 58) in which teachers can command respect, writing can be fascinating, subjects can be studied with enthusiasm, and so on. Finally, the use of '*soll*/'*sollte*' - should, should have, ought to have, was supposed to - are employed when interdiscursive elements of *Carola's* autobiographical identity at odds with the seemingly narrow straits of real student existence 'surface' as former hopes, others' predictions, etc. (39, 40, 41, 54). The method used to extract this KWIK-concordance of verbs of modality is outlined in Appendix 1.

CAROLA: VERBS OF MODALITY

[*soll*\*|*koenn*\*|*muss*\* - should|can, could|must, had to]

Corpus Search 6. 1

VERBS of MODALITY [müssen, sollen können - must, should, can, could]

(1)	(CAROLA)	eigentlich <PAUSE L> was	<b>soll</b> man sagen [pfff] also
(2)	(CAROLA)	<MP> eigentlich hinterher	<b>koennen</b> soll wenn man <UW>
(3)	(CAROLA)	hinterher koennen	<b>soll</b> wenn man <UW> geht
(4)	(CAROLA)	irgendwie geistig bilden	<b>soll</b> sehe ich aber <MP>
(5)	(CAROLA)	Professors wiedergeben	<b>muss</b> um eine vernuenfftige
(6)	(CAROLA)	man das Naechste machen	<b>muss</b> und <PAUSE L> das hat
(7)	(CAROLA)	denken kann sonst	<b>koennte</b> ich das mittlerweile
(8)	(CAROLA)	was ich <PAUSE L> ich	<b>muss</b> weiter ausholen <PAUSE
(9)	(CAROLA)	ich frage mich was das	<b>soll</b> weil ich ich glaube
(10)	(CAROLA)	sie nicht 50% bringen	<b>koennen</b> und ich frage mich
(11)	(CAROLA)	ich frage mich was das	<b>soll</b> dass man soviel Leute
(12)	(CAROLA)	ich weiss nicht was das	<b>soll</b> und das Problem in Wiwi
(13)	(CAROLA)	mal durchgefallen ist	<b>muss</b> man direkt ein halbes
(14)	(CAROLA)	geben	<b>muss</b> es gibt's auch <MP>
(15)	(CAROLA)	auch teilweise hoere dass	<b>sollte</b> zweimal durch die
(16)	(CAROLA)	denke nicht dass man man	<b>muss</b> sich einfach
(17)	(CAROLA)	dass ich <PAUSE L> man	<b>muss</b> erst mal fuer die
(18)	(CAROLA)	besuchen <PAUSE L> ich	<b>muss</b> arbeiten gehen weil
(19)	(CAROLA)	vorgegeben werden und die	<b>muss</b> man lernen <PAUSE L>
(20)	(CAROLA)	die Vorlesungen lernen	<b>muss</b> das sind sechzehn
(21)	(CAROLA)	fuer mich <PAUSE L> ich	<b>muss</b> erstmal zufrieden sein
(22)	(CAROLA)	ja da durchgekommen ich	<b>sollte</b> mal vielleicht nicht
(23)	(CAROLA)	dann auch weiss nicht man	<b>koennte</b> <UW> man koennte
(24)	(CAROLA)	man koennte <UW> man	<b>koennte</b> tolle Hausarbeiten
(25)	(CAROLA)	solche Sachen - und ich	<b>musste</b> mich ein halbes Jahr
(26)	(CAROLA)	dass ich zur Schule gehen	<b>musste</b> und ich hab' <SE
(27)	(CAROLA)	- es gibt Lehrer die	<b>koennen</b> Respekt verschaffen



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(28)	(CAROLA)	es gibt viele Lehrer die	<b>koennen</b> das nicht und wenn
(29)	(CAROLA)	F><N D><ABG> <O>ich	<b>sollte</b> heiraten also ich
(30)	(CAROLA)	sollte heiraten also ich	<b>sollte</b> <PAUSE S> ich hatte
(31)	(CAROLA)	Eltern <MP> halt so es	<b>muss</b> einfach alles geordnet
(32)	(CAROLA)	ok ist <PAUSE S> man	<b>muss</b> gepflegt aussehen
(33)	(CAROLA)	Maennern <PAUSE L> und	<b>musste</b> Tag- und Nachtschicht
(34)	(CAROLA)	Disposition gemacht und	<b>musste</b> dann so LKW Fahrer
(35)	(CAROLA)	zwei PCs <PAUSE S> und	<b>musste</b> <MP> halt die ganze
(36)	(CAROLA)	angerufen haben <PAUSE S>	<b>musste</b> nur mit nur Fahrern
(37)	(CAROLA)	angeben wo sie hinfahren	<b>sollen</b> [laughs] und <HES B>
(38)	(CAROLA)	gesagt <ESp B> uhm OK du	<b>musst</b> einfach kontern und
(39)	(CAROLA)	sagten <ESp B> uhm man	<b>soll</b> es einfach ausprobieren
(40)	(CAROLA)	ich schaffe das ich	<b>soll</b> das auf jeden Fall
(41)	(CAROLA)	S> weil ich denke man	<b>soll</b> auch seine Gefuehle
(42)	(CAROLA)	D><ABG> ja also <O B>ich	<b>muss</b> jetzt <UW> so <HES B>
(43)	(CAROLA)	CAROLA><G F><N D><ABG> ja	<b>muss</b> man ja <UW> und
(44)	(CAROLA)	Professoren orientieren	<b>muss</b> <RI B> <QI B> <PAUSE S>
(45)	(CAROLA)	verlangen was ich lernen	<b>muss</b> um die Klausur zu
(46)	(CAROLA)	<O B>was ich wissen	<b>muss</b> und das wird <O E> <O
(47)	(CAROLA)	die RS B>ich einfach	<b>koennen</b> muss <RS E> egal ob
(48)	(CAROLA)	RS B>ich einfach koennen	<b>muss</b> <RS E> egal ob ich
(49)	(CAROLA)	B> <QI B> <PAUSE S> so	<b>muss</b> ich praesent haben das
(50)	(CAROLA)	ich praesent haben das	<b>muss</b> ich verstehen das muss
(51)	(CAROLA)	muss ich verstehen das	<b>muss</b> ich ableisten
(52)	(CAROLA)	die auch Spass machen	<b>koennen</b> <PAUSE L> <SP R><G
(53)	(CAROLA)	Spass machen	<b>koennen</b> aber fuer mich ist
(54)	(CAROLA)	Sinn des Studiums sein	<b>sollte</b> (<QI B> weil bei
(55)	(CAROLA)	das wirklich faszinieren	<b>koennen</b> ((laughs)) <O E> <Sp
(56)	(CAROLA)	S> die sind einfach die	<b>muss</b> ich einfach machen kann
(57)	(CAROLA)	und die <PAUSE L>	<b>koennen</b> wenn man sie fragt
(58)	(CAROLA)	B> uhm spezialisieren	<b>koennen</b> dann <HES B> uhm
(59)	(CAROLA)	ja einen Schein machen	<b>koennen</b> oder auch eine

By contrast, *Torsten's* use of similar modal verbs is simple, bland even. He limits his descriptions of student learning reality to statements of 'fact': subjects *must* be learnt in a certain way; it's *necessary* to meet the right people; the right things *should* be written up (12,13,14). There is a marked reticence and absence of the more 'colourful' prosodic elements employed by *Carola*.

TORSTEN: VERBS OF MODALITY

[*müss\**|*soll\**|*koenn\** - must, should, can, could]

Corpus Search 6. 2

(1)	(TORSTEN)	Dass man dann also das	<b>koennte</b> ich jetzt so sagen
(2)	(TORSTEN)	feststellen <PAUSE S>	<b>koennen</b> <INH S> <HES B> uhm
(3)	(TORSTEN)	was dazu sagen wuerde dann	<b>muss</b> man vielleicht oefter
(4)	(TORSTEN)	bei uns <INH S>im Audimax	<b>muss</b> <MP> halt Jeder ich
(5)	(TORSTEN)	<MP> halt theoretisch	<b>koennten</b> dann auch welche
(6)	(TORSTEN)	weite Strecke fahren	<b>muss</b> oder man muss sich
(7)	(TORSTEN)	fahren muss oder man	<b>muss</b> sich hier an der Uni
(8)	(TORSTEN)	also der geht er	<b>muss</b> davon ausgehen dass
(9)	(TORSTEN)	B> hm und derjenige dann	<b>koennen</b> die anderen
(10)	(TORSTEN)	direkt lernen kann da	<b>muss</b> man sich <MP> halt
(11)	(TORSTEN)	zu treffen <PAUSE S> ja	<b>koennen</b> wir nicht alle
(12)	(TORSTEN)	HES B> uhm einer <MP> halt	<b>musste</b> die wiederholen
(13)	(TORSTEN)	weil <HES B> uhm er	<b>musste</b> die gleichen
(14)	(TORSTEN)	<HES B> uhm <RV B>	<b>muss</b> man sich natuerlich
(15)	(TORSTEN)	andere da mitschreibt dann	<b>muss</b> ich wissen

## Hedging

Turning now briefly to the massive presence of hedging particles like *'halt'* (126 occurrences in the relatively modest corpus of interviews used here), *'wirklich'* (61), *'ja'* (394) and *'eigentlich'* (76) - like, so, I mean, actually, in fact, really, etc., the most obvious function they perform is to provide some defence, an insurance against open disagreement when taking up positions in conversation. They can be seen as stakes in the negotiation process, ready to be sacrificed if necessary, yet serving as 'feelers' and gauging the discursual terrain. As will be shown further on with regard to making knowledge claims, students move tentatively around dominant discourses of learning and knowledge, sandwiched as they are between the 'modal' grip of necessity we saw above and their perceptions of alternatives to the discursive practices they learn to adopt in order to 'survive'. Corpus Search 6.3 below gives a selection of hedging devices in *Carola's* and *Torsten's* talk in immediate co-occurrence with the first person 'I' (*'Ich'*). *Carola's* hedging expresses predominantly resignation and frustration with given barriers (3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 12); *Torsten* is seen to hesitate on the verge of a statement that he has not yet formulated (11, 12).

### CAROLA AND TORSTEN: MODAL PARTICLES

#### Corpus Search 6. 3

KWIK-concordance for "ich" / "halt" (I / so, sort of, like, well)

```
ich | | halt
(1) (CAROLA) mir was fuer mein Kopf ich kann <MP> halt fuer mich
(2) (CAROLA) arbeiten kann weil ich studiere <MP> halt
(3) (CAROLA) die | Alternative gesehen ich mache <MP> halt Bilanzen
(4) (CAROLA) haben moechte <PAUSE L> ich moechte <MP> halt lieber
(5) (CAROLA) Problem weil lernen kann ich das <MP> halt es macht
(6) (CAROLA) anders | vorgestellt und ich wuerde <MP> halt <PAUSE>
(7) (CAROLA) ist | auch passiert - nur ich war <MP> halt frueher
(8) (CAROLA) | ich sollte <PAUSE S> ich hatte | <MP> halt <HES
(9) (CAROLA) es dann wirklich geht und ich hatte <MP> halt wirklich
(10) (CAROLA) und das Problem war ich bin <MP> halt jeden |
(11) (TORSTEN) Gemeinsamkeiten B | weil ich die halt ich meine ich
(12) (TORSTEN) muss <MP> halt jeder ich meine <MP> halt
```

Hedging as a sign of 'discourse under construction' is, in fact another central feature of this language data. Halliday points out that precisely in academic contexts, where talk and formulation of ideas is so central, the raggedness and imprecision of thinking done "as they go along" is typical (Halliday, 1989: 90). Anna Wierzbicka draws our attention to the cultural idiosyncrasy and semi-'untranslatability' of such hedging particles. While difficult to translate, they are, she goes on to point out,

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ubiquitous as "Their meaning is crucial to the interaction mediated by speech ..." and these meanings "are often remarkably complex" (Wierzbicka, 1991: 341)<sup>37</sup>.

## Summary

In this chapter, a closer examination of the discourse work being performed in the life story indicates that it is very much a product of interdiscursivity. The movements between different currents of experience enacted by the students in this 'discourse work' makes extensive use of layering and 'lamination' in the conversationalization of meaning. The shift into conversational mode can be seen as the insertion or irruption into stretches of discourse of others' voices by means of which seamless transitions between narrative and purportedly verbatim speech or internal speeches are enacted.

Whether turned to in order to carry forward discourses of empowerment by drawing on resources of experience from different (extra-interview) contexts of interaction, which potentially challenge 'official' discourses of the institution (e.g. *Marie*), or whether conversationalized speech is employed to establish shared institutional understandings (*Laleh*), the extended resources of layered discourse function as a **plausibility device**. Talk is grounded in the speech of others and open theories of learning and self are worked up and convincingly accounted for.

At the same time, the threatening nature of establishing knowledge claims and claims to an individual learning identity can be seen in the often massively hedged and prosodically marked accounts of the student respondents. Affective marking of speech may be employed to support and defend hard-won discursual positions (see *Carola*), while modality and hedging devices underline the 'balancing act' the students perform between the *in situ* discursive construction of identity in their learning biographies and the requirement to position themselves in relation to dominant discourses of learning and knowledge in the institution.

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<sup>37</sup> She draws our attention further to an insight of John Locke's into the role these complex parts of speech have in determining cognitive processes and in constructing discursive identity: "Neither is it enough, for the explaining of these words, to render them, as is usual in dictionaries, by words of another tongue which come nearest to their signification; for what is meant by them is commonly as hard to be understood in one as in another language. They are all marks of some action or intimation of the mind; and therefore to understand them rightly, the several views, postures, stands, turns, limitations, and exceptions, and several other thoughts of the mind, for which we have either none or very deficient names, are diligently to be studied" (Locke, 1690 cited in Wierzbicka, 1991: 342).

## **Chapter 7: Discourses of knowledge and learning (The Corpus 3)**

### ***Academic voice: academic discourse, knowledge claims and identity***

With reference to the assertion of knowledge claims in written production in academic contexts, in an investigation into scholarly articles in economics and business sciences, Ann-Charlotte Lindeberg writes that knowledge claims are "the expressions of aims or claims about the writer's own contribution, signalled by assertive, reporting verbs and containing a deictic reference to the writer ....". In addition to expressions of assertion, she suggests that the object under discussion, "the use of modals, mitigating adjectives or adverbials, and other hedges" are frequently present (Lindeberg, 1994: 321-2). Ivanic refers to students who "change their speech" on entering Higher Education (Ivanic, 1997: 25); Gunnarsson (1997b) distinguishes three levels of 'belonging' in a 'professional culture': the cognitive "knowledge-based network" rooted in its "metaphors, in terminology, in modes of reasoning..." and its discursive links to other areas of knowledge; the 'social' layer with "role structure, group identity, group attitudes and group norms"; and the 'societal' layer which regulates the relationship of a professional group to the broader social context (1997b: 100-101). In the following examples taken from the interview corpus, many of the features of a self-conscious knowledge assertion can be made out.

Turning now to an extract from the interview with *Henry R.*, we can hear how he is led to draw a strongly favourable comparison to his own advantage between his intellectual and professional skills before his university degree began and their state at the time of the interview.

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HENRY: KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION

Extract 7.1

1	HR:	das ist jetzt kein konkret kein	concrete no concrete aim
2		konkretes Lernziel das man hat	that's what you have when I
3		aber wenn ich jetzt so mal fuenf	think back so 5 years what
4		Jahre zurueckdenke was meiner (.)	my (.) sta-status at the
5		Sta Status vor Beginn meinens	start of my studies so I DO
6	→1	Studiums so merke ich schON? dass	see that such skills are
7	→2	so Faehigkeiten heute wesentlich	essentially much more
8		ausgepraegter sind dass man wenn	deeply embedded today than
9		man <u>frueher</u> im Unternehmen eine	when I'd get a task to do
10	→3	Aufgabe gekriegt hat dann hat man	in the firm and then you'd
11		die Aufgabe gesehen und wenn man	see the task and today when
12		heute (.) eine Aufgabe kriegt na	you get (.) something to do
13		dann ordnet man die mehr in (.)	well you see it as part of
14	→4	so ein groesseres GeBAEUDE rein	a bigger (.) structure
15		ne? {in ein Konzept	right? {in a concept

A short search for a relatively neutral, formal description of "skills" suggests "status"; a nervous beginning to the claim takes off with a rise in tone and volume on 'schON'/'already' (→1), a slight slurring renders a perhaps important personal note indistinct and he builds up the formal claim with a metaphorical turn 'wesentlich ausgepraegter'/'much more embedded' (→2). In the rest of his claim, he shifts from the directly personal to a more formal 'man' ('one', 'you', 'people') impersonal construction (→3), generalising and distancing himself in his discourse from his own significantly less able status in his earlier pre-academic learning career. Pronouncedly institutional-academic lexis is introduced when he talks of his present knowledge as a 'groesseres GeBAEUDE'/'a bigger strucTURE' (→4). The impersonal shift can be seen thus both as a slight uncertainty with his subjective claim as well as a hedging device, "playing safe" in the expectation of reaping agreement in the interview situation.

In the next extract, Henry is moving slowly towards a definition of the final objective profit gained in the course of studying. He is attempting a definition of the learning process he feels he has already passed through for he can already see the effects, in learning practices and in application to work outside the university. Self-reference forms the opening of this knowledge claim, passing at once into an 'objective' use of 'man'/'einen selber'/'einem selber' ('one'/'oneself'/to or for 'oneself'). Emphatic stress on 'LERNEN' and 'FAECHER' ('learning' and 'subjects') at →1 and 2 are aimed at winning consensus from his co-respondent, functioning as authoritative claims on

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joint group attitudes and values; these moments of stress intonation probably also signify moments of conversational stress, and can be interpreted as a request for help in his train of thought, a variant of an invitation to extend him "emotional reciprocity" (see Günthner, 1997). Again, declarative, hedging and modal devices ('mal'/'like', 'natuerlich'/'of course', 'eben'/'clearly', 'klar'/'clearly', 'meines Erachtens'/'the way I see it') are employed to move the discourse on and create legitimacy for the 'academic' train of thought developed (e.g. at ➔1).

**HENRY: LEARNING SKILLS**

**Extract 7. 2**

1	HR:	und ich denke mal das sind so	HR: and I think so those are
2		Faehigkeiten die man <u>im</u> Studium	skills that one develops
3		entwickelt die auch wichtig sind	<u>during</u> your studies which are
4		fuer einen selber (.) weil sie	important for oneself (.)
5		einem selber viel bringen als	because they provide one with
6		auch spaeter natuerlich fuer den	a lot as well of course for
78		fuer den Job? relevant sind uhm	the for your work they are
		(.) die jetzt keine (.) direkten	relevant uhm (.) which are not
		Lernziele im "Studium darstellen	uhm (.) which are not(.)
		die sich aber eben"" durch das	direct objects of study in
➔1		LERNEN einstellen (1.0) so das	"study but so"" come through
		Lernerei als solches klar das	<u>LEARNING</u> (1.0) so learning yeah
		gibt's eben na? meines Erachtens	there are so? in my opinion
➔2		FAECHER und Themengebiete	<u>SUBJECTS</u> and areas of study

**CAROLA: THE 'KLAUSUR' - "WHAT'S THE POINT?"**

In this extract from a joint interview with *Carola* and *Henry*, *Carola* asks here what the point of the examination system is, in a context where largely rote-learning and dramatic failure rates characterise student routines. Her speech is very heavily weighted with hedges (*also, mal, einfach, weiss ich nicht, eigentlich/well now, so, like, simply, only, don't know, actually*) as she works her way round from a criticism of the system to a more direct attack on her fellow students. The extract is also interesting for an unusual (with *Carola*) frequency of indecisive-aggressive puffing (marked as hhh = strong exhalation at ➔ 1 and 2) and hesitation. *Carola's* wish to propose an alternative learning practice seems seriously inhibited by the presence of *Henry* at the time.

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Extract 7.3

1 CO: also ich weiss noch nicht ich  
2 finde "das bei uns im Studiengang  
3 eigentlich zu viele Klausuren  
4 geschrieben werden das ist  
5 →1 einfach"" uhm weiss ich nicht hhh  
6 ich hab mit so vielen? Leuten  
7 gesprachen die einfach nur sich  
8 das uhm den ganzen Stoff  
9 reinknallen und die (1.0) koennen  
10 wenn man sie fragt oder sie fragt  
11 was sie da jetzt grad uhm weiss  
12 ich nicht auswendiggelernt  
13 wiedergeben wie das ihnen so  
14 jetzt sagt so? fuer die Praxis  
15 oder so "da mal weiter fragt"  
16 (.) es kommt nichts also was ich  
17 oft festgestellt hab sehr viele  
18 →2 Leute einfach hhh uhm den ganzen  
19 Stoff auswendiglernt haben? und  
20 die haben es auch nicht  
21 reflektiert die haben ueberhaupt  
22 nicht gefragt <ESp>so und so was  
23 fange ich jetzt damit an? was  
24 sagt mir das? ueberhaupt Nichts  
25 (.) es wird einfach nur auswendig  
26 gelernt das hab ich bei sehr  
27 vielen Leuten die ich kannte  
28 festgestellt und da frage ich  
29 mich was das fuer einen Sinn  
30 macht und da frage ich mich uhm  
31 ja wir schreiben ja fast nur  
32 Klausuren (.) uhm ob man da nicht  
33 ein bisschen mehr uhm  
34 Eigenstaendigkeit fuer die  
35 Studenten reinbringen kann

*I don't know I reckon in fact we have to write too many exams on our course it's just uhm I don't know .h I've spoken with so many people who just uhm fill themselves up with the stuff and they can when you ask them or you ask them what they're learning just now uhm I don't know they've learnt by heart get them to tell it to you say what it means to them right now in practice or if you just ask more (.) they don't say anything you know what I've often noticed is that a lot of people just .h uhm have learnt everything by heart and they haven't thought about it at all they haven't asked themselves anything like <ESp>right what am I going to do with this? What does this tell me? really NOTHING (.) they just learn everything by heart I've seen it with a lot of people that I knew and I just ask myself what sense does it all make and I ask myself uhm yeah we only really do exams (.) uhm wouldn't it be possible to have a little bit more::: uhm initiative for the students*

**CAROLA: THE 'PROFESSORS' - "YOU THINK YOU CAN CHANGE A LOT OF THINGS"**

Here, too, we have *Carola's* view of learning processes. Her disillusionment with uncommitted Professors turns into justification on the grounds of overfilled seminars and disappointment at the state of student life. This is a resistant discourse, but a marginalized resistance, as her language expresses fundamental disillusionment. Yet, *Carola* cannot or will not repress the demand for something better. Being *processed* depresses; but there is still that ideal of "fantastic" essays and free intellectual debate. She begins by depicting the problems of the '*Sprechstunde*' or 'contact time' and raises many of the points touched on in recent literature on just this subject (Boettcher and Meer, 2000).

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Extract 7.4

(a)

1	CO:	was mir da auffaellt ist dass	what I've noticed is that when
2		wenn man da in die Sprechstunde	you go to see a teacher you
3		geht man wirklich (2.0) wie ein	really go there (2.0) like
4	→1	Bittsteller zum Teil angesehen	asking a favour partly seen
5		wird also dass wirklich wie der	like that so really the student
6	→2	Student ist dumm der weiss	is stupid he (sic) doesn't know
7		nichts der hat keine Ahnung und	anything has no idea and
8		irgendwie (1.0) weiss ich nicht	somehow (1.0) I don't know gets
9	→3	so behandelt wird als muesste	treated as if you ought to say
10		man <ESpB>danke sagen dass man	<ESp>thank you that you sort of
11		irgendwie fuenf Minuten	got kind oof five minutes time
12		irgendwie Zeit bekommt oder so	or so (1.0) I reckon and (1.0)
13		(1.0) finde ich und (1.0) weiss	I don't know {yeah
14		es nicht {ja	
15	R:	mhmm}	mhmm}
16	CO	ja das ist auch wie ein Problem	yeah it's also like a problem
17	→4	der Masse VWL ist da komisch da	of the mass of people Economics
18		sind nur 5% der Studenten und ja	is strange there are only 5% of
19		hab' ich teilweise mit	the students there and
20		Professoren eine Stunde	sometimes I've talked to
21		gesprachen ueber ein Problem das	Professors about some problem
22		gibt es in BWL gibt es gar nicht	for an hour and that's ok but
23	→5:	(...) wird man halt abgefertigt	in Business Studies you don't
24		weil da so viele Leute da sind	get that at all (1.0) there you
25		und Professoren haben vielleicht	just get processed because
26		aufgrund der ganzen Fuehle von	there are so many students and
27		Studenten auch keine Lust oder	the Professors probably because
28		so was sich grossartig zu	of the incredible number of
29		beschaeftigen was weiss ich=	students aren't interested to
			do all that much I don't know=

At →1 *Carola* characterises the role of the student when contacting teaching staff as 'asking a favour'. She increases this turn to hard, critical language by suggesting the student is seen as 'stupid' (→2). *Carola* avails herself further of hypothetical speech at →3 to underline the cogency of her position. The construction of this interpretation of the studying process is carried on further with the use of the term 'processed' ('*abgefertigt*' at →5) which she contrasts with the more favourable, but clearly unrepresentative treatment in the minority subject of Economics - VWL (→4) - as opposed to the mass-subject Business Administration (BWL).

In the second part of this extract, *Carola* asserts her conviction that at the beginning there was a sense of being able to expect more from studying than what actually came. A sense of being able to change a lot of things (→1).



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**CAROLA: 'I IMAGINED IT DIFFERENTLY'**

**Extract 7. 5**

**(b)**

1	CO:	=ja und dann geht man (???)	=yeah and then people go
2		an die Universitaet und	(???) to university and they
3	→1	denkt man kann Vieles	think they can change loads
4		bewegen	of things
5	R:	was {denn?	like what?
6	CO:→2	ich) weiss nicht man hatte	I don't know you had I don't
7		dann auch weiss nicht man	know you could (???) it would
8	→3	koennte [???) man koennte	be possible to write
9		tolle Hausarbeiten schreiben	fantastic essays and discuss
10		und schoen eigenstaendig mit	really freely with the
11		den Professoren diskutieren	professors and that (1.0) but
12		und das (1.0) gab es aber	there was somehow it's
13	→MP	irgendwie kann man es	difficult to explain because
14		schlecht erklaren weil man	perhaps because you somehow
15	→MP	irgendwie vielleicht ist man	get disillusioned about
16		desillusioniert worden von	economics yeah I imagined it
17		der Wirtschaftswissenschaft	all differently and I
18	→ED	ich hab' mir das halt anders	wouldn't go to university to
19		vorgestellt und ich wuerde	study again
20		halt (.) jetzt nicht mehr	
21		studieren	

The interviewer's first position pick-up at line 5 forces *Carola* to explain her position and justify the positive discourse she has just sketched in. *Carola's* difficulties are apparent in her hedging and hesitation (lines 6-8 →2). The question is face-threatening and her proposed answer at →3 seems to demand from her stronger arguments. The abundance of modal devices indicated as →MP ('irgendwie'/'somehow', 'irgendwie vielleicht'/'somehow perhaps') suggests this withdrawal into more certain epistemic territory. *Carola* seems first to twist the blame for her disillusionment onto herself (lines 15-17). This may be understood as an attempt to seek a shared, non-threatening discourse position, aligning herself with the common-sense of the institution. However, she seems to think better of it and comes out again at →ED with a determinedly 'own' discourse of resistance and rejection. This is a strong epistemic claim, and she has successfully inscribed it in the account she is giving here of her learning.

**CAROLA: THE 'ARBEITEN' - "I GET TOLD WHAT TO LEARN"**

*Carola's* previous critical tenor is confirmed in the next extract. Knowledge is acquired through aligning oneself absolutely to the examination demands of the 'Professors'. The academic community in this context is experienced as a strait-jacket. *Carola's* frustration is forcibly given expression by the 6 rhythmic raps with

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her rings on the table top, sounds which speak more than her words themselves (indicated with →Pro).

Extract 7. 6

1	CO:	... es ist einfach so dass uhm	<i>it's just that uhm tja +you</i>
2	→1	tja +man hat jetzt einfach	<i>just have certain things</i>
3		bestimmte Sachen zu machen++ (.)	<i>you've got to do++ (.) before</i>
4		bis man fertig wird und das ist	<i>you're finished and partly</i>
5	→2	zum Teil eh er <u>Pflicht</u> weil das	<i>that's mo:re duty because</i>
6		(.) wie <u>ich</u> das sehe ist dass (.)	<i>that (.) the way I see it is</i>
7		uhm ich +mich an der	<i>that (.) u:hm I have to</i>
8		Universitaet++ also sehr stark an	<i>orientate myself really</i>
9	→3	den Professoren orientieren muss?	<i>closely to the professors?</i>
10		(.) und an sich <u>das</u> abzuleisten	<i>(.) and basically I have to</i>
11		hab was sie von mir verlangen was	<i>deliver what they want what</i>
12		ich <u>lernen</u> muss um die Klausur zu	<i>they want me to learn in</i>
13		bestehen (.) zum Beispiel ich	<i>order to pass the exam (.)</i>
14		meine bei der Diplomarbeit +war	<i>for example I mean the thesis</i>
15		das nicht so schlimm++ aber in	<i>wasn't so bad but as a rule</i>
16		der <u>Regel</u> uhm wird mir vorgegeben	<i>uhm I get told what I've got</i>
17		was ich wissen muss und das wird	<i>to learn and that's [bangs</i>
18	→Pro	((strikes table 6 times in tact))	<i>table six times in tact] just</i>
19		abgefragt deswegen ist es fuer	<i>reeled off and that's why</i>
20	→4	mich eher eine <u>Pflicht</u> (.) kann	<i>it's more a duty for me (.)</i>
21		sicherlich sein dass +die eine	<i>it may be of course that I</i>
22		oder andere Sache mir auch	<i>like one thing or another</i>
23		gefaellt wenn ich sie lese++ das	<i>when I read it that's clear</i>
24		ist <u>klar</u> (.) aber <u>erstmal</u> ist	<i>(.) but first of all it's</i>
25		es halt (.) uhm (.) +irgendwie++	<i>just (.) uhm: (.) sort of a</i>
26		eine bestimmte Menge von	<i>certain amount of literature</i>
27		Literatur die +ich einfach	<i>which I just have to know it</i>
28		koennen muss++ egal ob ich moecht	<i>doesn't matter whether I</i>
29		oder <u>nicht?</u> (.) so muss ich	<i>want to or not? (.) so I have</i>
30		praesent haben <ESp>das muss ich	<i>to keep in mind &lt;ESp&gt;I've got</i>
31		verstehen das muss ich ableisten	<i>to understand this and I've</i>
32	→Pro	((rhythmic finger rapping))	<i>got to get this finished</i>
33		deswegen ist es fuer mich eher	<i>((rhythmic finger rapping))</i>
34	→5	eine <u>Pflicht</u> (.) unter	<i>that's why it's more a duty</i>
35		Umstaenden halt manchen Dingen	<i>for me_ (.) and under certain</i>
36		die auch Spass machen koennen	<i>circumstances things that can</i>
			<i>also be fun</i>

Carola also develops a strong epistemic discourse here, putting forward a very strong critique of the university system as she experiences it. At →1, →2, →4 and →5 she raises the concept of 'Pflicht'/'duty' which is contrasted with 'fun' (line 36) or with things she can read and profit from (21-23) rather than masses of reading and learning material that simply has to be learnt (26-28). She gets told what to learn, she says, and the learning system is geared to orienting oneself closely to the Professors (→2). The result of the learning process thus described is simple: what she learns has to be 'reeled off'/'abgefragt' (19).

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## Learning processes:

### TORSTEN: THE STUDY GROUP - "WE CAN'T READ EVERYTHING ..."

The interviews provided the students with an opportunity to talk about their positive learning strategies in the face of the exam regime *Carola* vented her frustration upon. The study group (*Lerngruppe*) is the form student self-help takes and it has a culture all of its own for which there is no space to go into here. As an instance of student learning discourses an extract from *Torsten's* careful sketch of the workings of a self-study group will serve our purpose here. *Torsten* feels his way around the question of the value of what he and his fellow study group members do. While he is perfectly convinced of the effectiveness of studying in this way in a group, the hedging employed in this extract seems to suggest a basic diffidence about the intellectual standing of their study methods. Again, this is a 'sub rosa' discourse, existing alongside and officially dis-recognised by the dominant academic practices and discourses.

#### Extract 7. 7

- |    |     |                                     |                             |
|----|-----|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1  | TO: | uhm es ist ((coughs and clears      | uhm it's ((coughs and       |
| 2  |     | throat)) es ist ganz                | clears his throat)) it      |
| 3  |     | unterschiedlich gewesen also es     | varies was different I mean |
| 4  | →MP | waren teilweise? uhm wirklich       | partly? it was uhm really   |
| 5  |     | Skripten die wir jetzt ja wenn man  | scripts that we if you can  |
| 6  | →MP | da so sag mal relativ:              | say that were relatively    |
| 7  |     | unuebersichtliches                  | complicated a 150 page      |
| 8  |     | hundertfuenfzigseitiges Skript aus  | script which you can't use  |
| 9  |     | dem man so nicht direkt lernen kann | just like that to learn     |
| 10 | →MP | da muss man sich halt .h uhm wenn   | from you have to .h uhm if  |
| 11 |     | es nur darum geht die gleichen      | it's only a question of     |
| 12 | →MP | Inhalte quasi nur noch mal          | having the same content     |
| 13 |     | abzuschreiben und wenigstens in     | just writing it out again   |
| 14 |     | komprimierterer Form dass man das   | at least in compressed form |
| 15 | →MP | auf zehn Zettel oder so hat {und    | that you can get it on ten  |
| 16 |     | nicht                               | pages and not               |
| 17 | R:  | gut verstaendlich} ?                | easy to understand          |
| 18 | TO: | hundertfuenfzig Seiten ja           | 150 pages yeah well perhaps |
| 19 |     | vielleicht den einen oder anderen   | this or that sentence has   |
| 20 |     | Satz ausformulieren oder wir haben  | to be reformulated or we    |
| 21 | →MP | auch uhm dann die Literaturangaben  | also took uhm the           |
| 22 | →MP | die ja *teilweise sind versuchen    | bibliography which is       |
| 23 |     | wir dann aus-"" eine Auswahl ^^ zu  | partly we try out of that   |
| 24 |     | treffen (.) ja koennen wir nicht    | to get a selection (.) I    |
| 25 | →MP | alle lesen und uhm dann vielleicht  | mean we can't read          |
| 26 |     | die noch mal verstaendlich          | everything and uhm then     |
| 27 |     | zusammenzufassen                    |                             |

The mass of modal particles (→MP) in evidence in this short extract from *Torsten's* talk about the *Lerngruppe* support the interpretation that *Torsten* is extremely wary

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of expressing a claim to knowledge that might be challenged, or indeed might be thought to challenge the interviewer's position. *Torsten's* cautious development of a model for learning – geared totally to the institutional bench-mark of semester examinations – shows the importance here of the institutional discourses that the students develop in order to talk about experiences of learning, learning practices, and their theories of learning in the institutional context "*Uni*".

The student respondent *Özlem* provides a rich selection of insights into learning practices, developing complex discursal accounts of her own experience as a student. In this first extract, *Özlem's* concept of 'knowledge' is described tentatively.

**ÖZLEM: 'IT HAS TO BE A CHALLENGE'**

Categories: Learning Discourse/Self and Knowledge

**Extract 7. 8**

1	ÖM:	{ es muss irgendwie eine	{it has to be a challenge} (.) so
2	→1	<u>Herausforderung</u> } sein (.) also	
3	R:	jeh?	yeah?
4	ÖM:	al:so es ist nicht dass ich jetzt	we:ll it's not that I'd put down
5		einen anderen Studiengang herabtun	another course or so or say that
6		wuerde oder also oder sagen dass	it was really much <u>easier</u> so but
7		es wesentlich <u>einfacher</u> so aber	(.) mhm so I find right now like
8		(.) mhm also ich finde jetzt halt	that for me <u>personally</u> the
9		fuer michs <u>persoenlich</u> ist die	challenge in uhm in the course
10	→2	Herausforderung in uhm in dem	Business Administration is really
11		Studiengang Wirtschaft wesentlich	much greater? (.) and that <u>counts</u>
12		groesser? (.) und das <u>zaehlt</u> halt	too like (.) Now I'd be much
13		auch (.) ich wuerde mich jetzt zum	happier about getting a 3 in
14		Beispiel uhm über ne Drei im	Business uhm than getting a 1 in
15		Wirtschaft wesentlich mehr freuen	(.) "Sowi or something" and that
16		als über eine Eins in (.) "Sowi	was like for example <u>one</u> of the
17		oder so" und das war halt zum	reasons
18		Beispiel <u>einer</u> der Gruende	
19	(1.0)		
20	R:	.hhh wieso_	.hhh how come_
21	(1.0)		
22	ÖM:	wieso?	how come?
23	R:	mmhm	mhmm
24	(1.0)		
25	ÖM:	(???) bei mir ist es so dass also	(???) in my case it's like that
26		ich hab dann mehr das Gefuehl dass	that right I've have more of a
27	→3	ich was geleistet hab "oder so"	feeling that I've achieved
28		(.) weil ich halt dann auch (.)	something "so to speak" (.)
29		ja?	because like as well I've (.)
			yeah?
30	R:	ist es weil es schwierig ist oder	is it because it's difficult or
31		weil { es viel ist?	because {it's a lot?
32	ÖM:	weils fuer mich schwieriger ist }	because for me it's more
33	→4	ja	difficult} yeah
34	(1.0)		

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Over lines 4 to 9 *Özlem* is setting out a hedged rationale for a critique of one degree course (Sociology) in favour of her own main subject (Economics/Business Administration – line 11). A strongly felt reluctance to deliver a dispreferred institutional discourse damning a whole department is hearable in *Özlem's* refusal to declare herself an 'expert'. Her final verdict is heavily hedged and exaggeratedly indexicalized ('*ich finde jetzt halt fuer mich persoenlich*'/'I find right now like that for me personally') and can thus be heard as potentially difficult and therefore massively mitigated, just in case the institutional co-respondent should challenge her. Nevertheless, at ➔2 she comes back to her original candidate definition of 'worthwhile knowledge' which she presented at ➔1, i.e. that learning must be a 'challenge' ('*Herausforderung*'). She builds on this in the following turns, at ➔3 with the idea of having achieved something, and at ➔4 with the statement that complexity, difficulty *for her* personally means that a subject is worth learning.

In the next extract, *Özlem* packs into a short narrative of learning experience – and the experience is essentially chastening, but profitable – the lessons learnt from not having understood the rhythm of university exams when first confronted with them. The narrative takes her from the period when she imagined herself able to go along to the lectures, making slipshod notes (➔1 and ➔2) and starting to revise a mere three weeks before the next exam (lines 12-22). Interestingly, *Özlem* begins this narrative in the neutral mode, employing the general '*man*'/'you' or 'everyone' (12, 14). She aligns herself briefly with all other students and then corrects herself (lines 16-17 '*also bei mir war es so*'/'it was like that in my case'). A plausible explanation for this repair work may be that the discourse of self-correction and increased learning success she is in the process of developing (she has said at 10 that 'in the meantime' things are pretty well under control) requires this self-criticism in order that her discourse is 'water-tight'. At any rate, she embellishes the narrative at this difficult point (difficult, I repeat, for her face if she is to maintain her discourse of success to the end) and down-plays her own achievements, thus rendering her ulterior performance all the more solid and visible. She employs (at ➔Pr) a prosodic chant-like string of actions ('*nichts aufgearbeitet grossartig mitgeschrieben* (.) *eingepackt nach Hause gegangen*'/'didn't write up anything much make notes (.) just things away off home') with the bare past participles mimicking the imaginable

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doings of this inexperienced student she so deftly depicts for the hearer. By comparison, the 'lesson' she draws in this extract is developed in relatively sober fashion. She learns how not to do things (→3) and a minimum of understanding and industry in term-time is deemed necessary (→4).

**ÖZLEM: 'YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THINGS'**

Categories: Learning discourse/Self

**Extract 7.9**

- |    |     |   |   |
|----|-----|---|---|
| 1  | R:  | so aber das ist so beschreiben Sie        | <i>so but that is you describe like</i>         |
| 2  |     | { so d- mit WiWi                          | <i>that {so t- with Business</i>                |
| 3  | ÖM: | ja die Leistungen }                       | <i>yeah the requirements}</i>                   |
| 4  | R:  | und d- das was Sie leisten muessen        | <i>and th- what you have to do at</i>           |
| 5  |     | mindestens am Ende von jedem              | <i>least at the end of every</i>                |
| 6  | ÖM: | { mmhm?                                   | <i>{mmhm?</i>                                   |
| 7  | R:  | Semester } (2.0) und? wie kommen          | <i>semester} (2.0) and? how do you</i>          |
| 8  |     | Sie zurecht mit diesem Lernen fue-        | <i>cope with this way of learning</i>           |
| 9  |     | fuer fuer solche Klausuren uh?            | <i>fo- for for these exams uh?</i>              |
| 10 | ÖM: | mittlerweile gut                          | <i>in the meanwhile well</i>                    |
| 11 | R:  | { mittlerweile?                           | <i>{in the meanwhile?</i>                       |
| 12 | ÖM: | also } (.) ja? am Anfang hat man          | <i>well} (.) yeah? at the beginning</i>         |
| 13 |     | ja: drei Wochen vorher angefangen         | <i>you used to start three weeks</i>            |
| 14 |     | hhehh so man ist halt zu den              | <i>before hhehh so you went like to</i>         |
| 15 |     | Vorlesungen gegangen und aber             | <i>the lectures but nothing got</i>             |
| 16 | →1  | nichts aufgearbeitet also bei mir         | <i>sorted out in any case it was</i>            |
| 17 |     | war es so ich hab nichts                  | <i>like that in my case I didn't</i>            |
| 18 | →2  | aufgearbeitet grossartig                  | <i>write up anything much make notes</i>        |
| 19 | →Pr | mitgeschrieben (.) eingepackt nach        | <i>(.) just things away off home (.)</i>        |
| 20 |     | Hause gegangen (.) und dann halt          | <i>and then so a couple of weeks</i>            |
| 21 |     | paar Wochen vorher angefangen zu          | <i>before start to <u>learn</u> and when</i>    |
| 22 |     | <u>lernen</u> und wenn man dann das erste | <i>you fail the first time then: you</i>        |
| 23 |     | Mal durchfaellt dann: merkt man           | <i>notice that it definitely <u>doesn't</u></i> |
| 24 | →3  | das es so auf jeden Fall <u>nicht</u>     | <i>work like that and in the final</i>          |
| 25 |     | geht und im Hauptstudium geht's           | <i>years even less so you must</i>              |
| 26 |     | noch weniger da muss man wirklich         | <i>really <u>consistently</u> at least (.)</i>  |
| 27 |     | uhm <u>konsequent</u> zumindestens (.)    | <i>so: ah I mean you have to</i>                |
| 28 |     | so: ah ich meine die Sachen soweit        | <i>understand things at least so far</i>        |
| 29 |     | noch verstehen dass man die               | <i>that you can follow the lecture</i>          |
| 30 | →4  | Vorlesung einigermassen mitkommt          |   |

In the last two extracts that terminate this chapter, Özlem is developing strong arguments about and against the type of learning practices that dominate students' semester-to-semester studying experiences. In the first extract (Extract 7.10), Özlem hears the characterization that the interviewer gives of her learning methods (→1) but does not seem to recognize herself in his words. The interviewer himself shows awareness that his depiction is dispreferred. His stammering self-repair at line 7 would seem to establish that in the hearing of both participants. Özlem's reaction is non-committal: her distant 'ja leider'/'yeah unfortunately' is finished off with a short laugh and a disclaimer (→2). The point she was making, she seems to be inferring,

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has been missed by the interviewer. By way of changing the direction of the talk, she starts up a different discussion, though not without difficulties (false starts and repairs from line 12 to 14) and focuses on the official discourses of the university, utilizing one of her rare uses of embedded speech when she mimics the 'voice' of the exam-setting professor or department (→3). She draws a negative picture of the long-term results of studying the way the university seems to require her to do, i.e. complete loss of all that was learnt for the exam (→4 and →5). As a final guard against a potential face-threatening challenge from the interviewer, Özlem puts forward a factual knowledge claim in support of her arguments (→6). She has raised her remarks here to the level of a generalized statement and challenges the interviewer to question her experience. Lowering her voice to the level of self-dialogue (tagged within quiet speech symbols °...° lines 34-35), fixing her assertion as 'private thought', one might say, can be heard as a further mark of resistance to the interviewer's discourse. As such, she is denying him insider knowledge rights and claiming membership of a group who can be expected to know these things. Her epistemic discourse rests on the identity claimed in this fashion.

ÖZLEM: 'I DON'T LEARN SO THAT I KNOW THE STUFF A YEAR LATER'

Categories: Learning Discourses/Institutional Discourse

Extract 7. 10

- |    |     |                                      |  |
|----|-----|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1  | R:  | und dieses stures Auswendiglernen    | <i>and this narrow learning by heart</i>     |
| 2  |     | dann das sind uhm ist das ein        | <i>then that's uhm is it an example</i>      |
| 3  |     | Beispiel fuer diese Art von Dingen   | <i>for the type of things that have</i>      |
| 4  |     | die <u>geleistet</u> werden muessen? | <i>to be <u>achieved</u>?</i>                |
| 5  | ÖM: | = uhm .hh                            | <i>=uhm .hh</i>                              |
| 6  | R:  | = wie fuehlen Sie sich wenn Sie      | <i>=how do you feel when you've ah-</i>      |
| 7  | →1  | ah- was stur- stur- ge-              | <i>something narr- narrow le- you've</i>     |
| 8  |     | auswendiggelernt haben               | <i>learnt by heart</i>                       |
| 9  | ÖM: | ja leider kann ich das nicht so      | <i>yeah unfortunately I'm not so</i>         |
| 10 | →2  | gut hhehhh ich freue mich immer      | <i>good at that hhehhh I'm always</i>        |
| 11 |     | wenn ichs dann behalten hab? (.)     | <i>happy when I've learnt something?</i>     |
| 12 |     | aber es ist jetzt nich: ? uhm ich    | <i>(.) but it's not: that? uhm I</i>         |
| 13 |     | finds nich gut_ (.) also i- die      | <i>don't like it_ (.) well i- the</i>        |
| 14 |     | Sachen die ich wirklich              | <i>things I really learn by heart</i>        |
| 15 |     | auswendiglerne zum Beispiel in       | <i>for example in lots of exams you</i>      |
| 16 |     | ganz vielen Klausuren wird ja        | <i>are asked &amp;ltESp&gt;name the five</i> |
| 17 | →3  | gefragt &ltESp>nennen Sie die fuef   | <i>tasks of of cost accounting or</i>        |
| 18 |     | Aufgaben von von der                 | <i>like that then it's really uhm</i>        |
| 19 |     | Kostenrechnung oder so dann sind     | <i>precisely the five words they</i>         |
| 20 |     | das wirklich uhm genau die fuef      | <i>want to hear and not: uhm that</i>        |
| 21 |     | Woerter die sie hoeren wollen und    | <i>you so in general sort of name</i>        |
| 22 |     | nich: uhm dass man da allgemein      | <i>like the task right it's exactly</i>      |
| 23 |     | irgendwie die Aufgabe halt nennt     | <i>those five words then you get the</i>     |
| 24 |     | also genau die fuef Woerter dann     | <i>five points [R: mhm] I'll know</i>        |
| 25 |     | gibt's halt die fuef Punkte [R:      | <i>them for sure up to the exam- to</i>      |
| 26 |     | mhm] die kann ich mit Sicherheit     | <i>the exam day an hour later I</i>          |

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27	bis zum Klausur- zum Klausurtag eine	still know it but then it's all
28	Stunde spaeter kann ichs auch noch	gone (.) so I don't learn so that
29	→4 aber dann sinds auch weg (.) also	I know the stuff a year later [R:
30	ich lerne nicht so dass ich die	mhmm?] like that doesn't help
31	noch ein Jahr spaeter weiss [R:	much (2.0) and that's like that
32	→5 mhmm?] also das bringts nicht viel	for certain "by almost everyone"
33	→6 (2.0) und das ist mit Sicherheit	(.) "I reckon so" (.) in
34	"fast bei allen so" (.) "denk ich	particular in subjects like BWL
35	mal" (.) also grade bei solchen	
36	Faechern wie BWL	

In the last extract, a further category membership is introduced in *Özlem's* discourses of learning, that of extra-university professionals and their alternative learning practices. In answer to the interviewer's prompt, she confirms that 'outside', e.g. at the bank where she is currently employed part-time, there is a 'different type of learning' (→1). The quantity, the time involved, she suggests, is not the crucial point. The important difference that she underlines is that the knowledge she is required to acquire by the bank is immediately *applied in practice* (→2). A more agreeable way to learn, she asserts (→3).

An attempt by the interviewer to discover whether *Özlem's* definition of 'useful knowledge' meant that such knowledge spilled automatically over into life outside the work-place or university is not picked up (→4). The interviewer changes tack, back to the 'technique' of learning at →5 (the agenda being influenced by the learning experiences of numerous other respondents, e.g. here notably *Henry* Extracts 7.1 and 7.2 above) and provides the topic of knowledge acquisition and organization as a skill which is learnt at the university. *Özlem* picks this topic up and responds in such a fashion as to join in the neutral, 'objective' discourse proposed by the interviewer (consistent use of '*man*'/'people' or 'one' lines 55-61). She confirms in this neutral vein that knowledge once acquired may re-surface if stimulated or refreshed (→6). The interviewer's query whether this referred to knowledge acquired during her studies as well as that acquired on the job excites a defensive reaction on *Özlem's* part (→7). The interviewer's suggestion is heard as problem-laden and is rejected. No, not everything is forgotten that is learnt at the university ('it's not as if like everything was gone' - line 68).



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**ÖZLEM: 'THAT'S A DIFFERENT TYPE OF LEARNING'**

Categories: Learning Discourse/Self/Knowledge

**Extract 7.11**

1	R:	uhm:: ja? und was ist mit diesen	uhm:: yeah? and what about these
2		(.) Lerntechniken also uhm	(.) learning techniques so uhm do
3		benutzen Sie sie auch <u>ausserhalb</u>	you use them as well outside the
4		von der Uni? zum Beispiel bei der	Uni? for example at work? do you
5		Arbeit? muessen Sie woanders auch	have to learn in any other place
6		so lernen? (1.0) { Dingen	in that way? (1.0) {commit things
7		behalten?	to memory
8	ÖM:	so nich? }	not like that?}
9	R:	nee?	no?
10	ÖM:	an der Arbeit kommt es natuerlich	at work of course it's like that
11		auch vor aber (.) das ist ja ein	sometimes but (.) that's a
12	→1	anderes Lernen also jetzt zum	different type of learning well
13		Beispiel halt bei der Dresdner	for example at the moment at the
14		Bank hab ich erst? vor kurzem die	Dresdner Bank only? recently I
15		Abteilung gewechselt und da hatten	changed departments and we had so
16		wir halt vier Wochen komplett	four weeks complete fulltime
17		Vollzeitschulung (.) ich musste	training (.) I had to learn the
18		halt die ganzen Sachen mit	whole lot about share documents
19		Wertpapiergeschaeften und Boersen	and the stock exchange through
20		hin und her lernen aber uhm da	and through but uhm there you get
21		kriegt man das halt (.) also man	it like (.) so you read it once
22		liest sich das einmal <u>durch</u> es ist	<u>through</u> and of course it's not
23		zwar noch nicht uhm alles im Kopf	all in your head but .hh then you
24		aber .hh dann muss mans ja	have to like apply it you you do
25	→2	anwenden man machst dann halt drei	it so three days on the trot or
26		Tage lang oder so und dann kann	so and then you know it in fact a
27	→3	man das eigentlich ein	pleasanter way of learning (1.0)
28		angenehmeres Lernen (1.0) und das	and that stays with you for
29		bleibt dann auch laengerfristig da	longer [R: mmhm] so I think I
30		haften [R: mmhm] also das denke	won't ever forget that "or less
31		ich das vergesse ich nie "oder	at least"
32		schon weniger"	
33	R:	die sind aber das auch? fuer die	but they are that too? for the
34		Klausuren wie auch teilweise	exams and partly also f- for the
35		vielleicht f- fuer die Bank auch?	bank too? above all it's uhm you
36		das ist vor allem uhm da muessen	have to learn things you uhm::
37		Sie Dinge lernen Sie uhm::	either in an exam or directly at
38		entweder in einer Klausur oder	work you apply? them they are'nt
39		direkt bei der Arbeit an?wenden	things like that which you <u>talk</u>
40		das sind nicht Dingen da worueber	about with friends for example?
41		Sie zum Beispiel mit Freundinnen	(1.0) are they?
42	→4	mit Freunden <u>sprechen</u> ? (1.0) oder?	
43	ÖM:	"selten"	"seldom"
44	R:	=selten eben { das sind das sind	=right seldom {they are they are
45		Information	information
46	ÖM:	eigentlich gar nicht	actually not at all probably}
47		wahrscheinlich }	
48	R:	also die: Sie sind mittlerweile	so they: you are in the meantime
49		sehr gut also Sie koennen	really good right you can absorb
50		unheimlich viel Information	a mass of information <u>without</u>
51	→5	<u>einfach</u> [OM: mmhm] (.) aufnehmen	<u>difficulty</u> [OM: mmhm] (.) and
52		und verdauen (.) und: vielleicht	<u>digest</u> it (.) and: perhaps even
53		auch organisieren?	organise it as well?
54	(1.0)		
55	ÖM:	man merkt ja man denkt ja auch bei	you notice yeah you think right
56		vielen Sachen dass man sie	with lots of things that you
57		eigentlich gar nicht mehr kann und	don't know them anymore and then
58		wenn man dann irgendwo mal was	when you read something somewhere
59	→6	liest oder so das faellt ja einem	or like that it sort of comes

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60	ja wieder ein so ja da war ja eben	back to you like yeah there was
61	so einen Kurs oder so	right some course or other like
62	R: das heisst insbesondere vom	that means particularly from
63	Studium? { das heisst zum Beispiel	studying? {that means for example
64	<u>langzeit</u>	long-term
656	ÖM: uhum vom Studium ja genau }	uhum yeah right from studying}
67	R: Wirkung?	results?
68	ÖM: es ist nicht dass ja alles weg ist	it's not as if like everything
→7		was gone

*Özlem* is switching to a new discourse tack in the last line (68). She is defending her experience against the all too schematic interpretation the researcher is seemingly trying to force on it. *Özlem* is not prone to use the pithy affective language of *Carola*, nor does she ground her talk so densely with the speech of others as does *Marie*. Yet she maintains her position when 'under threat' with a self-contained reserve, that has something of stubbornness in it, if such a term is permissible here. Whatever the most apt description of her discursual stance may be, it is striking how clearly she builds a narrative shell around the positions she is required by the interviewer to occupy. Her learning discourses are not - at least in these data - strikingly unconventional or passionate. On the contrary, they are rather more sober than passionate. Yet they are there to hear and they are given biographical shape as they emerge *and* they are frequently at variance with the institutional agenda of the interviewer.

On the basis of the small number of interview respondents examined here, we can establish a limited taxonomy of learning practices:

- *ÖZLEM* in the *Bibliothek* (University Library): working in the library to escape distraction; a strict division between the learning environment and the social environment. *Özlem*, of course, lives alone, i.e. not inside a family environment. Indeed, she lives far from her family, with her brother in distant Osnabrück, her parents in Turkey.
- *TORSTEN* in his '*Lerngruppe*' ('workgroup'): *Torsten's* experience of the *Lerngruppe* is the most significant of this sort encountered in the corpus. His *Lerngruppe* has survived into the fifth year and provides an inexhaustible resource of support and organization. It represents a systematic approach to preparation for the regular examinations and as a social support group. A

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particularity of the *Lerngruppe* in *Torsten's* case is its gender, semester, and geographical homogeneity.

- *CAROLA* the 'scanner': *Carola*, by contrast, sees learning for the examinations as comparable only to the process of scanning, automaton-like. She proposes a discourse of strict resistance, yet in order to finish she is prepared to submit herself to the demands of the 'Professors'.
- *MARIE* the 'Beraterin'/the 'advisor/mentor': *Marie* has shown that her development has taken her from 'shy' observer and follower to self-confident advisor. Her version of the *Lerngruppe* is more modest than *Torsten's* and much less systematic. She generally works alone, or at most with one friend. The bonds of the first semesters for *Marie* have loosened considerably and she makes her way independently. She is insistent, however, that the basic principle for success for most fellow students is co-operation and mutual help.
- *HENRY*: *Henry* sees the effects of his learning on his increased ability to process material productively. He adheres more closely to the values of the institution and seems to have largely taken them over in his own practice.

## Summary

'Belonging' to a professional culture and knowledge assertion within that discursal context, as we see, can be difficult. Thus *Carola* (Extract 7.5 above) is heard as she rejects her own initial attempts to find a non-threatening shared understanding of learning practices and successfully inscribes a strong - potentially face-threatening - epistemic claim in the account she gives of her academic experience. Under similar circumstances, however, hedging is employed where the student evidently feels a strong sense of diffidence towards his/her own knowledge claims (*Torsten*).

In fact, '*sub rosa*' discourses, i.e. discourses existing alongside and officially dis-recognized by the dominant academic practices and discourses (like *Torsten's* or *Özlem's* 'insider' perceptions of learning processes) can be defended or proposed with massive hedging. This effectively mitigates the challenge the student feels s/he is

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enacting towards the institution, but also reduces the 'danger' involved in putting such a case forward. It can also mean, however, that the students' identity/knowledge claims are seriously weakened.

An alternative is to establish insiders' knowledge rights over against those of the interviewer. *Özlem* (Extract 7.9) demonstrates how by denying the institutional co-respondent insider knowledge rights and claiming membership of a group who can be expected to know such insider information, her epistemic discourse rests firmly on the category-based identity claimed in this fashion.

In the next chapter, this last aspect of discursal identity construction and confirmation - identification of self in category-bound activities - is examined in greater detail in the interviews given by *Carola* and *Özlem*.

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Ivanič points out that the discourse community should not be considered in a monolithic sense (1997: 78-83). Consequently, viewing the positioning of the individual in relation to a discourse community (such as that of the university degree course in business studies) and to its orders of discourse in a two-dimensional way is unlikely to be very productive. Ivanič employs the terms 'accommodation', 'opposition' and 'resistance' to conventions of discourse communities, fully aware of the ambiguity involved in any taking up of position within an open-ended process of self-development. Although arguing her case for writer identity on the basis of written data, her point seems wholly valid for spoken discourse, too:

"...[writers] align themselves with one or more of the discursual possibilities for self-hood which are available within the academic community, thereby contributing to *reproduction or change* in the patterns of privileging among those discourses in the whole order of academic discourse ... Resistance consists of alignment with - perhaps even 'accommodation to' - less privileged discourses, rather than wholesale dismissal of one discourse and creation of another" (Ivanič, 1997: 92-3; *my emphasis - RE.*).

The findings presented here are able to substantiate largely Ivanič's point. The richness of the biographical narratives produced in the interaction of the interview are the source and resource of the students' construction of a whole series of discursive identities and discourse practices. Pre-work, pre-HE experience is elaborated in the case of all interview respondents (including all those whose data awaits transcription) to a working, in-process discursive self. I endorse here fully Ivanič's rejection of the idea of an 'own', largely static self attained at some point

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(Ivanič, 1997: 215-53) in favour of 'owned' voices, various changing socially constructed 'selves'. One of the strongest impressions communicated through the language data is of *change* and of *passage* from earlier states of being and doing to uncertain prospective states. These last are experienced as heavily conditioned by the discourses, understood as 'facts of life', of the common context of learning of which the students speaking here are members. If, on balance, the overriding impression their narrative discourses convey is of 'accommodation' as Ivanič suggests is reasonable to expect, and alignment with less privileged discourses - discourses of frustration and confusion perhaps - their learnt discourse and their ability to reflect upon their 'owned' discursive practices is evidence of what other researchers have called "the active and highly creative rhetorical work involved in formulating identity" (Edley and Wetherell, 1997: 215).

Elliot makes the useful point in his analysis of interview data produced in talk with adult HE learners that the student self is a mix of fragility and resilience: "The voice of the students suggests that their student self [in post-compulsory education] is both fragile and resilient. A variety of importance factors" – and he cites the home, finances, and individual experiences of success and failure in education – "combine to create a complex web, a multi-faceted aspect to the adult's being as a student" (Elliot, 1999: 60). This fragility, which reveals itself most evidently as resistance and reticence in the interaction of the interview, is an eloquent piece of evidence for the essentially reciprocal nature of the institutional discourse I have been examining here. The student is challenged, sometimes seriously, by the requirement to theorize and explain. But they rise to the challenge, almost invariably (see again *Marie's* and *Carola's* talk) and demonstrate their discursive resilience.

Life and education narratives – narrativized experience – "are produced and developed through the interactional work of co-participants" in discourse practice (Mischler, 1997: 224). The interactional work Mischler refers to here takes place, it would seem to me, on various levels, including within the discourse of the speaker, or within the "core story" (1997: 234) the speaker has to 'tell'. This "core story" is what Krüger cites as "expression of the life-history as a linguistically shaped learning process" (Krüger and Marotzki, <sup>2</sup>1996: 34). The traces such insertions and narratives

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deposit in the flow of the discourse are – albeit ambivalent – traces of the theoretical work being done in the process of formulation of utterances in interaction and, as such, rank as among the most important resources we can exploit in an attempt to infer meaning and discursal identity from respondents' discursive work (see Gülich on 'traces': Gülich, 1994: 79-80; Ivanič, 1997: 120).

### ***Discourses of self and identity as membership category description***

We have seen above how *Marie* traces her own development through a "deficient" to an "empowered" state of her life. She narrates her progress from someone without access to the top-shelf jobs (Extract 5.1) to an experienced student, able to advise and help fellow students (Extract 4.10 section 2). By employing in the extracts below the analytical method called variously membership category device ('MCD' in the category headings for the Extracts below) or membership category analysis, a useful tool for inferring meanings from the interactive moves of respondents in relation to their membership of groups and categories, the interactive enactment of identity can be unfolded (Baker, 1997; Lepper, 2000). Respondents are understood as giving accounts for activities as a member of a category (e.g. respondent, student, Turkish student) and both respondent and interviewer are understood as being jointly involved in the generation of the data analysed with the aid of membership category analysis. In this perspective, the questions put by the interviewer, too, are part of the data (Baker, 1997: 131). Talk is, according to this viewpoint, "social action" through which people "achieve identities, realities, social order and social relationships" (1997: 132). It is possible, therefore, by deploying this kind of category analysis and by investigating the category-bound activities (CBAs) respondents evoke or describe in order to cope with the interview encounter and the questions the interview poses them, to find a way into the 'doing' of culture, of personality, of identity (Baker, 1997: 137).

I shall conclude the analysis of the interview corpus with five extracts which exemplify this use of **membership category description** in the construction of identity and own learning discourses.

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ÖZLEM: ACADEMIC LEARNING AND ITS LIMITS

Categories: MCD/Self/Learning discourse

Extract 8.1

This extract begins with a direct elicitation of a judgement. *Özlem* is called on to pass a judgement on her development as a result of the five or six years she has spent studying at the university. She is specifically asked to comment on the effect of learning on her self (1-6). Lengthy pauses of two and three seconds respectively frame *Özlem's* reluctant reaction to this request and signal her unwillingness at this point to accept the floor. Her initial response is to repeat the interviewer's words (line 8), in an attempt, perhaps, to return the floor to him. At line 10 the interviewer comes back with an alternative proposition – '*gleich geblieben?*'/'stayed the same?' – which once again requires *Özlem* to align to his agenda and which is clearly heard as coercive and dispreferred. At →1, in fact, she demonstrates alignment to the discourse of change he seems to be proffering. Resistance would, certainly, be face-threatening at this stage, for it would suggest that she had remained static, fixed in the condition she was when she began to study all those years ago.

At →2, however, we can hear her beginning to generate an own 'twist' to the interviewer's discourse, as she takes over the raw concept and begins to furnish it with a robust hierarchy of category-bound activities which serve to ground her new description of her development. For, initiating a neutral '*man*'/'you', 'people'. 'one'-type discourse at line 16 (→2), she switches in an important self-repair to an own epistemic line of talk: '*also ich denk mir dass es uhm dass ich (.) in meinem Leben ...*'/'like I think that it uhm that I definitely won't...' (16-17). This epistemic turn is further strengthened by the strong set of modal (and hedging) devices at lines 18-19 (→MP). She piles '*mit Sicherheit nicht irgendwann nochmal*'/'definitely won't learn in my life anytime again' into her turn, whereby the hedge-like 'anytime' here presumably functions as a defensive-declaratory hedge against any opposition to her statement. The prosodic element in her placing of emphasis at this point is likewise understandable as opposition.

- |   |    |                                     |                                   |
|---|----|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | R: | sechs Jahre und? (1.0) ja wie wie   | six years and? (1.0) yeah how how |
| 2 |    | betrachten Sie diese fuerf bald     | do you see these five soon six    |
| 3 |    | sechs Jahre ja und was ist das dann | years right and what kind of time |
| 4 |    | fuer ein eine Zeit fuer ein Lernen? | time type of learning? is it mm-  |
| 5 |    | ist es mm- sind Sie anders          | have you become different?        |



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6	geworden?	
7	(2.0)	
8	ÖM: mmhm (1.0) anders geworden?	<i>mmhm (1.0) become different?</i>
9	(3.0)	
10	R: gleich geblieben?	<i>remained the same?</i>
11	ÖM: ich meine ja sicher irgendwie	<i>I think yeah of course somehow I'm</i>
12	→1 anders geworden gleich geblieben	<i>different remained the same don't</i>
13	glaube ich nicht	<i>think so</i>
14	R: {ja wie denn?	<i>{yeah how then?</i>
15	ÖM: anders geworden } vielleicht dass	<i>become different} perhaps because</i>
16	→2 man (.) also ich denk mir dass es	<i>you (.) like I think that it uhm</i>
17	uhm dass ich (.) in meinem Leben	<i>that I (.) definitely won't learn</i>
18	→MP mit Sicherheit <u>nicht</u> irgendwann	<i>in my life anytime again so much</i>
19	nochmal so viel oder (.) u- in der	<i>or (.) a- in the same way never</i>
20	→3 Art lernen werde nie nach dem also	<i>after the like now studying but I</i>
21	jetzt Studienzeit aber ich glaube	<i>think now that when I've finished</i>
22	jetzt wenn ich mit dem Studium	<i>studying then .hh (.) I know all</i>
23	fertig bin dann .hh (.) weiss ich	<i>the things I'll do so like I (.)</i>
24	→4 schon was ich alles mache also also	<i>like in my case for example like</i>
25	ich (.) also bei mir ist es zum	<i>since I've been studying I've read</i>
26	Beispiel seitdem ich studiere habe	<i>f- fantastically few other books</i>
27	→5 ich s- superwenig irgendwelche	<i>which have really nothing to do</i>
28	andere Buecher gelesen die wirklich	<i>with my studies perhaps now and</i>
29	mal <u>nichts</u> mit dem Studium zu tun	<i>again like .hh whether it's a</i>
30	haben vielleicht zwischendurch mal	<i>kitschy novel or whatever before I</i>
31	→6 .hh sei es nun Kitschroman oder so	<i>used to read every type of book?</i>
32	was frueher habe ich wirklich <u>alle</u>	<i>and now studying you don't do it</i>
33	→7 Buecher verschlungen? und jetzt im	<i>anymore like that because somehow</i>
34	Studium macht man das halt nicht	<i>I just don't find the time for it</i>
35	mehr so weil ich irgendwie halt	<i>and after studying I'm only going</i>
36	nicht die Zeit dazu finde und nach	<i>to read books like that (.) so</i>
37	dem Studium werde ich halt nur noch	<i>nothing much in particular in the</i>
38	→8 so Buecher lesen (.) also nichts	<i>way of learn-</i>
39	mehr grossartig lern-	

Over the rest of this extract, *Özlem* invokes in her aid a category-bound description which seeks to establish a contrasting set of epistemic values. She refers to the learning method a student is required to learn and her own acquisition of this method (→3), in order to contrast it with an alternative CBA, i.e. learning differently, reading for personal reasons rather than because it is necessary. The contrast is organized into 'now' and 'after', and *Özlem* projects her description into a future manner of learning or knowledge acquisition which she claims to know for certain (→4). Thus, taken down to the level of motivation, *Özlem* uses the two roughly contrasted CBAs to draw a theoretical distinction between the coerced requirements of study and the potential freedom of choice she will be able to enjoy upon completion of her studies. At →5 she describes the kind of activity studying has consistently prevented (reading outside of her main subjects), which she bolsters at →7 with a CBA in which the pre-student existence is connected to the 'reading every type of book', including the intellectual hedge introduced at →6 of the 'kitschy novel'

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which, must, I feel, be heard as defiance of the interviewer's inferred agenda. *Özlem* completes her response with a final CBA (→8) with which she proposes personal choice in reading as an alternative to academic learning. Thus her overall position is defined through her implicit criticism or rejection of the standards of the institutional study process (as represented in the local context of the interview by the interviewer) in favour of a set of CBAs which are oriented to learning in another, evidently more self-defined, context.

In Extract 8.2., the interviewer suggests that *Özlem* is ambitious on account of the type of career-oriented decisions she sought to make at the beginning of her studies. The category-bound description he is seeking to put across is based on the tandem of her early career wishes – tourism/interpreting – and proposes *Özlem's* choices as 'practical' and functional. The idea seems to be that these are only 'choosable' as targets if a person possesses certain characteristics: a practical turn of mind, perhaps, a desire to travel or use language. She is, after all, Turkish-German, her family is divided between Germany and Turkey, she may wish to accommodate both of these factors in the one career direction? At any rate, the potential group to which the interviewer's discourse is assigning her is a possibly pre- or infra-university career path, something less than the full academic path the university promises.

*ÖZLEM: RESISTANCE*

Extract 8. 2

- |    |       |   |                                       |
|----|-------|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1  | R:    | ja ja ja .hh und uhm sie haben ja       | Yeah yeahyeh .hh and uhm you          |
| 2  |       | auch gesagt Tourismus und sie           | also said tourism and you             |
| 3  |       | wollten nicht unbedingt Dol-            | didn't really want to be an           |
| 4  |       | Dolmetscherin_ uhm das sind beide       | interpre- interpreter_ uhm            |
| 5  |       | sehr sehr <u>praktische</u> (1.0) uhm   | they're both very <u>practical</u>    |
| 6  |       | fast das sind fast <u>Berufsziele</u>   | (1.0) uhm almost they're              |
| 7  |       | (2.0) waren sie immer so?               | almost career aims (2.0) were         |
|    |       |   | you always like that?                 |
| 8  | ÖM:→1 | zielstrebig?                            | ambitious?                            |
| 9  | R:    | =ja                                     | =yeah                                 |
| 10 | (.)   |   |                                       |
| 11 | ÖM:→2 | nee                                     | no                                    |
| 12 | R:    | = das das {klingt so                    | =that that sounds so                  |
| 13 | ÖM:   | {???} }                                 | {???}                                 |
| 14 | R:    | für mich klingt das sehr ja also        | for me that sounds a lot yeah         |
|    |       | das heisst                              | then that means                       |
| 15 | ÖM:   | = ge- nee ganz im <u>Gegenteil</u> +ich | =on- no it's the <u>opposite</u> +I'd |
|    | →3    | wuerde sagen ich bin ueberhaupt         | say that I'm not <u>ambitious</u> at  |
|    |       | nich zielstrebig++                      | all++                                 |
| 16 | R:    | = nee?                                  | =no?                                  |
| 17 | (1.0) |   |                                       |

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18	ÖM:	nee_ also nicht wirklich also wenn	no_ I mean not really so when
19		ich was anfangen dann (.) mache ich	I start something then (.)
20	→4	es vielleicht zu Ende .hh also das	perhaps I finish it .hh so
21		ist dann vielleicht zielstrebig	perhaps that is ambitious but:
22		aber: (.) ich merks halt im meinem	(.) I see it in my studies
23		Studium dass ich nicht zielstrebig	that I'm not ambitious because
24		bin weil ich nicht von Anfang an	from the beginning onwards I
25		(.) no- gewusst hab halt (.) wie	didn't (.) st- didn't know
26	→5	ich mein Studium aufbaue auch wenn	like (.) how to organise my
27		Sie mich jetzt fragen wuerden wenn	studies even if you asked me
28	→6	ich jetzt Banken und Controlling	given that I've got banking
29		Schwerpunkt hab wo ich jetzt	and controlling as my main
30		wirklich nachher landen werde	subjects where I'm going to
31		"weisse ich nicht" obwohl?	land up "I don't know"
32		obwohl ich in einem Jahr fertig	although it? although I'll be
33		bin (.) also es gibt natuerlich	finished in a year (.) of
34		<u>schon</u> Interessensgebiete und	course there <u>are</u> interesting
35		Unternehmen die ich mir vorstellen	areas and companies I could
36		kann aber das als zielstrebig	imagine but to say that's
37		genau weiss dass ich das machen	ambitious know exactly that
38		will (.)	I'll do that (.)

Özlem's response to the interviewer's category-bound description is at first cautious.

At →1 we hear the same reluctance to align to the interviewer's discourse as we heard in the previous extract above. This unwillingness to accept the floor is extended over →2 and at →3 Özlem rejects the interviewer's description outright. At →4 she proposes an alternative definition of ambition that suggests a different type of pragmatism. Finishing something one has started can be understood here as a claim to membership of a different category group. Study choice which is determined by 'mere' pragmatism (the interviewer's allusion in lines 1-7) is contrasted with a more responsible commitment to finishing something one has embarked upon. At →5 Özlem begins to turn her discourse to her own fashion of thinking, proposing a less practical, hearably more explorative approach to studying (lines 24-26: 'because from the beginning onwards I didn't (.) st- didn't know like (.) how to organise my studies') and she is immediately prepared for an expected challenge from the interviewer ('auch wenn Sie mich jetzt fragen wuerden'/'even if you asked me') and re-formulates an unspoken definition of study choice: the assumable CBAs one might automatically associate with the choice of banking and controlling as main subjects do not hold, she says (→6). Thus, here too, Özlem fends off an expected set of CBAs. They may run something like this: Banking is a narrow area of professional activity as is Controlling, they both prescribe certain values, work-places and specific activities. Choosing them may mean accepting the intrinsic values commonly associated with these subjects. The discourse claim she makes here establishes her as

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independent of the commonly-held category-bound descriptions. She asserts her own right to define her version of doing being a student.

In Extract 8.3., *Özlem* picks up again on the mitigating discourse of Extract 8.1. Here, the CBA she develops in her narrative of study choice (sociology at first against economics, replaced then again finally by the more 'serious' economics) includes the concepts of student uncertainty (→1), shopping-around behaviour (→2: signing up for sociology for a couple of semesters) and finally realization of the 'realistic' arrangement of useful knowledge (→3 and →4). For studying sociology is assigned to a category of pleasure (→5), interest (at →4 even super-interest!), social relevance and personal enrichment, and all of these qualities are contrasted with the categories of seriousness, weightiness, practicality and directedness. Studying sociology entails following the CBA of learning for fun, following it as a hobby, but not the necessity of making it into one's profession (→6). The activity-bound contrast is most clear at →7 where *Özlem* offers a seminar on the economic significance of marriage in society as an example of a student activity rich in interest and self-development. Doing this sort of thing is 'fun' (line 37) and this type of knowledge you can '*so runterlesen*'/'just read it easily like' (37-38). Her final judgement is hedged and conditioned with signs of caution and self-defence as she delivers a potentially heavy verdict on a challenged topic. At →8 her dismissal of sociology is defensively hedged by her alignment to a discourse of 'seriousness': 'I'll do that [sociology – R.E.] now and then as well so I don't need that necessarily obviously I won't do it in such an intensive way but:', she says, and adds cautiously ('*das brauche ich dann nicht unbedingt studieren*'/'I don't necessarily need to study it') that she does not need to study such subjects (→9). That she is here aware of a potential challenge is clearly hearable in her hedging. The emphasized '*nicht*' is preceded by a weak logical '*dann*'/'then' or 'in that case' and the adverbial pair '*nicht unbedingt*', invariably translatable as simply 'not necessarily', is more or less reversed by the emphasis on '*nicht*'. It becomes hearable as 'on no account' or 'under no circumstances' and is thus interpretable as a strong knowledge claim and firm resistance to the interviewer's agenda.

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Challenged to theorize about what one *needs* to study, at →10 Özlem initiates a theory-oriented utterance ('*das was man*'/'what people') and breaks off.

ÖZLEM: 'WHAT DO YOU NEED TO STUDY?'

Categories: Learning Discourse/Knowledge/Self

Extract 8.3

- |    |     |  |  |
|----|-----|--|--|
| 1  | R:  | Gewerb- Gewerbe beziehungsweise            | commer- trade or industrial world              |
| 2  |     | industrielle Weltwirtschafts- erm          | economic- erm areas were present?              |
| 3  |     | Gebiete gabs? waren das waren sind         | were they were is it the economy               |
| 4  |     | es die Wirtschaft oder was die sie         | or what which for you was {always              |
| 5  |     | immer { interessiert hat?                  | interesting?                                   |
| 6  | ÖM: | uhuh} nee ich bin auch? als ich            | uhuh} no I'm also? when I began                |
| 7  |     | hier im ersten Semester angefangen         | here in the first semester I                   |
| 8  | →1  | hab war ich mir auch nicht sicher          | wasn't certain at all whether it               |
| 9  |     | ob es das Richtige (.) also                | was the right thing (.) like                   |
| 10 |     | Wirtschaft ist ja im Grundstudium          | Economics is above all really dry              |
| 11 |     | vor allem sehr trocken und hab ich         | in the preliminary studies and I               |
| 12 | →2  | mich fuer Sowi eingeschrieben und          | registered for Sowi <sup>38</sup> and in order |
| 13 |     | mal die Kehr- die Kehrseite zu             | to see the oth- the other side I               |
| 14 |     | sehen hab doch einige Seminare so          | did some seminars like that                    |
| 15 |     | gemacht weil ich mich nicht so (.)         | because I wasn't able to (.)                   |
| 16 |     | richtig festlegen konnte und da hab        | really fix on one thing and I                  |
| 17 |     | ich auch gemerkt dass Wirtschaft           | noticed that Business Studies more             |
| 18 | →3  | doch eher (2.0) .hh = <u>also ich</u>      | (2.0) .hh that means I believe                 |
| 19 |     | <u>finde</u> so: also jetzt in in Sowi in  | like: so now in in Sowi in the                 |
| 20 |     | dem Studiengang wars halt diese            | course it was these seminars that              |
| 21 |     | Seminare die ich so gemacht habe           | I did like that they were all                  |
| 22 | →4  | waren noch alle superinteressant           | really interesting and so (.) but              |
| 23 |     | und so (.) aber das waren halt auch        | they were just things that I uhm               |
| 24 |     | so Sachen die ich uhm mir                  | can imagine like that I? would                 |
| 25 |     | vorstellen kann da wo ich? die             | perhaps read the books as a <u>hobby</u>       |
| 26 | →5  | Buecher vielleicht auch als <u>Hobby</u>   | (.) so_ and I just don't know                  |
| 27 |     | lesen wuerde (.) so_ und ich weiss         | whether you have to turn your                  |
| 28 |     | halt nich ob man sich sein Hobby           | hobby so (.) necessarily into your             |
| 29 | →6  | dann (.) unbedingt zum Beruf machen        | job like when you've read right                |
| 30 |     | muss also wenn man da halt                 | somekind of (.) .hh psychological              |
| 31 |     | irgendwelche (.) .hh psychologische        | things or things like that or                  |
| 32 |     | Sachen oder so gelesen hat oder            | pedagogical <u>things</u> you (.) there        |
| 33 |     | paedagogische <u>Sachen</u> hat man (.) da | was this seminar for example (.)               |
| 34 |     | war das eine Seminar zum Beispiel          | uhm in the economic theory of                  |
| 35 | →7  | (.) uhm in die oekonomische Theorie        | marriage or something (.) and: (.)             |
| 36 |     | der Ehe oder so (.) und: (.) das           | that was fun you could just read               |
| 37 |     | hat Spass gemacht konnte man so            | it easily like but I'll do that                |
| 38 |     | runterlesen und so aber das mach           | now and then as well so I don't                |
| 39 |     | ich dann halt auch so zwischendurch        | need that necessarily <u>obviously I</u>       |
| 40 |     | mal also das brauche ich dann nicht        | <u>won't do it in such an intensive</u>        |
| 41 |     | unbedingt <u>natuerlich mache ich</u>      | <u>way</u> but: (.) I don't need it I          |
| 42 | →8  | <u>nicht in der Intensitaet aber: (.)</u>  | noticed that I don't necessarily               |
| 43 |     | das brauche ich dann ich hab mir           | need to study it_                              |
| 44 | →9  | gemerkt das brauche ich dann <u>nicht</u>  |  |
| 45 |     | unbedingt studieren_                       |  |
| 46 |     | (2.0)                                      |  |
| 47 | R:  | was braucht man studieren?                 | what do you need to study?                     |
| 48 |     | (3.0)                                      |  |
| 49 | ÖM: | *was braucht man studieren?* (1.5)         | *what do you need to study?* (1.5)             |
| 50 | →10 | das was man (1.0) .hh ja schwierige        | (1.5) what people (1.0) .hh yeah               |
| 51 |     | Frage                                      | difficult question                             |
| 52 |     | 4.0)                                       |  |

<sup>38</sup> Sowi = Sozialwissenschaften /Social Science

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Thus we can see how the deployment of recognizable and plausible sets of category-bound descriptions is crucial for *Özlem* to warrant her career and study paths and justify her personal outlook and judgements of her student learning strategies. Interestingly, almost the same argument (sociology versus economics), and the same deployment of membership categories has been seen already in a similar piece of talk in the *Carola* interview used at 5.14 above (see lines 49-65 and →4 and →5), and re-discussed below in Extract 8.5. To jump ahead for a moment, the difference between these two similarly constructed discourses of learning, however, is that *Özlem* grounds her theory of knowledge acquisition on the contrast between serious activity/activity for pleasure. *Carola*, however, on the basis of very similar experiences, constructs an essentially complementary scale of comparison according to which one type of knowledge (economics) has pragmatic and practical value, while another knowledge-type and its implicit category-bound activities (sociology and sociological debate and peer-group interaction) is accorded a more important position for the respondent's self-development in her personal learning process.

We return to *Carola* here, to another extract, or part of an extract that has already been discussed from a different point of view (see Extract 5.9). In Extract 8.4 *Carola* narrates her induction into work in a rough men's world in road haulage. She frames her narrative with an especially effective type of category-bound description, namely a *location category* (→1). As Lepper points out, the location in which a narrative is framed, or "common-sense geography" as she calls it, "may be used for a variety of sense-making purposes" (Lepper, 2000: 26). The use of locations is a universal feature of talk, allowing spatial categories and inferences about the speaker's role and place to be inserted into talk, as well as elements of time, indexicality, and knowledge rights in exchanges (Lepper, 2000: 27). In *Carola's* narrative, the location (the haulage firm) is embellished with a mass of indexical and referential details about *Carola*, the other people and the physical surroundings. *Carola* defines her initial point of entry as difficult, for she was young, inexperienced and shy (→2). This is significant for the work the CBAs here are made to do (lines 13-30) as she returns to this description of herself at line 37 (→6) where she repeats the information. This over-arching membership category description – 'shy' and eighteen – carries with it a set of probable characteristics which, it can be assumed, are shared

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by both *Carola* and the interviewer. As such, it functions as a confirmation of understanding and underlines shared knowledge rights. The contrast *Carola* is working on establishing here is further underlined at →4 ('irgendwie nur zwanzig Maenner'/sort of only about 20 blokes') which is again a repetition of the location category description at →3. The discourse of growth and personal development *Carola* is developing in her narrative is skilfully offset by a further example of membership category description at →5 where she is able to distance herself by age, by activity, and conceivably by education from 'one woman with a telephone she was sort of forty', who is made to become part of the challenging location which *Carola* ultimately learnt to work in successfully.

CAROLA: A NARRATIVE OF GROWTH

Extract 8.4

1	CO:	wenn ich mit achtzehn bewarb	<i>Carola: At eighteen there</i>
2		da waren nicht so viele	<i>weren't so many training</i>
3		Stellen es gab halt wirklich	<i>jobs there were really</i>
4		Probleme die ganzen	<i>big problems in taking on</i>
5		Auszubildenden zu uebernehmen	<i>trainees (.) so I came in</i>
6		(.) da bin ich dann in eine	<i>this department where I'd</i>
7	→1	Abteilung gekommen da war ich	<i>been before where I was</i>
8		noch (.) war ich halt schon	<i>before (.) but I was</i>
9		vorlauter geworden aber immer	<i>still pretty shy (.) and</i>
10	→2	noch ein bisschen schuechtern	<i>I was put in this</i>
11		(.) bin dann in eine	<i>department with about 20</i>
12	→3	Abteilung gekommen zu zwanzig	<i>men (...) and I had to do</i>
13		Maennern (2.0) und musste	<i>day and night shifts and</i>
14		Tag- und Nachtschicht machen	<i>did the freight orders</i>
15		und hab dann Disposition	<i>and had to send drivers</i>
16		gemacht und musste dann so	<i>to Dormagen or wherever</i>
17		LKW Fahrer nach Dormagen	<i>and I had two walky-</i>
18		schicken und dergleichen	<i>talkies (.) two</i>
19		hatte dann irgendwie zwei	<i>telephones and two PCs</i>
20		Funkgeraete (.) zwei Telefone	<i>(.) and all the time I</i>
21		und zwei PCs (.) und musste	<i>was talking to the</i>
22		halt die ganze Zeit mit	<i>foremen calming them down</i>
23		Meistern sprechen die	<i>who used to ring in</i>
24		besaenftigen die voellig	<i>completely aggressive (.)</i>
25		aggressiv angerufen haben (.)	<i>I had to deal with only</i>
26		musste nur mit nur Fahrern	<i>with drivers from the</i>
27		von irgendwelchen LKWs	<i>lorries you know sending</i>
28		irgendwie durchfunken	<i>out messages and you know</i>
29		irgendwie (.) angeben wo sie	<i>(.) telling them where</i>
30		hinfahren sollen heheheh und	<i>they had to drive to</i>
31		uhm da arbeiteten halt	<i>heheheh and uhm and there</i>
32	→4	irgendwie nur zwanzig Maenner	<i>were sort of only about</i>
33	→5	und eine Frau am Telefon die	<i>20 blokes working there</i>
34		irgendwie vierzig war (.) und	<i>and one woman with a</i>
35		das war halt auch ein Problem	<i>telephone she was sort of</i>
36		weil ich war achtzehn noch	<i>40 (.) and that was a bit</i>
37	→6	relativ :schuechtern: (.) und	<i>of a problem I was 18 and</i>
38		uhm	<i>still pretty shy:(.) and</i> <i>uhm</i>

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The final extract in this chapter is also taken from a piece of the *Carola* interview that was looked at in chapter 5 above (Extract 5.14), and which contains *Carola's* striking use of the 'scanner' metaphor to describe the activities of a student, locked into the learning process dictated by the university's round of examinations, credits, fail-lists, rote-learning and dissatisfaction (→1). As has already been argued above in connection with Extract 8.3, here *Carola* develops a discourse of learning which is constructed with the aid of CBAs related to different types and *locations* of learning. For the location category she invokes to support her theorizing – a sociology seminar on *Egoism and Reason* and seminars in which she can discuss and debate with like-minded students (→2 and →3) – plays a leading role here. The motivation of the one side of her studies, with all its exciting and restorative power, is described as complementing, in a way she can no longer do without (lines 24 and 32) the other side, which is her studies in economics. For these she reserves the CBAs of scanning information into her head, running off to the next exam, forgetting everything and then starting over again.

**CAROLA: 'I JUST FEEL LIKE A SCANNER ...'**

**Extract 8.5**

1 CO: weil ich mir eigentlich  
2 →1 vorkomme wie ein Scanner ich  
3 hab gedacht ich hab ein Haufen  
4 gescannt alles rein schreibe  
5 die Klausur (1.0) und nach  
6 einem Monat ist das Wissen  
7 abgetaucht in die naechste  
8 Klausur die naechste Sache das  
9 fand ich eigentlich nicht sehr  
10 sinnvoll (1.0) weil ich hatte  
11 dann halt die Sachen schon mal  
12 gehoert oder so das Wissen  
13 taucht ab wenn man das Naechste  
14 machen muss und (1.0) das hat  
15 mir nicht mehr gefallen dann  
16 hab mich fuer Sowi  
17 eingeschrieben und in einem  
18 →2 Seminar ueber Egoismus und  
19 Vernunft besucht und das hat  
20 mich in so fern wieder  
21 motiviert als dass ich mich  
22 dann in die VWL wieder setzen  
23 konnte und ja mittlerweile Wiwi  
24 durchhalte aber nur weil ich  
25 diese Soziologiestudium hab um  
26 das irgendwie zu kompensieren  
27 weil ich halt andere Sachen hab  
28 →3 wo ich in Seminaren sitzen mit  
29 Leuten diskutieren kann wo ich  
30 wirklich eigenstaendig denken

*I just feel like a scanner I reckoned I had scanned a load of stuff scanned it in me in and do the exam (1.0) and after a month or so everything's forgotten then into the next exam and the next I didn't reckon much on that (1.0) because I'd learnt everything and then like all the information just goes again when the next exam comes round and you have to do it (1.0) and I didn't like that much so then I registered for Sociology and went to a seminar about Egoism and Reason and that sort of motivated me so that I could go to economics lectures again and in the meantime I just about manage to survive economics but only because I've got this Sociology course to compensate for everything because like I've got other things to think about where I can sit in seminars and discuss with others where I can really think for myself otherwise I wouldn't be able to hold out ...*



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31 kann sonst koennte ich das  
32 mittlerweile nicht durchhalten

In this, the final chapter devoted to the analysis of the interview data, I have attempted to sketch in some of the uses to which category-bound description is put in the talk of student respondents in order to organize their discourses of learning within plausible and explanatory frameworks of activity and group membership.

### **Summary**

In this final chapter devoted to the analysis of student talk, I have tried to show how the use of membership categorization devices (MCDs) and category-bound activities (CBAs) aids respondents in the management of their discourses of learning. The "co-operative accomplishment of expressive caution", as Silverman defines this phenomenon (Silverman 1997b: 72) makes it possible for students to warrant their own discourses either by establishing 'normal' associative categories which the institutional co-respondent will accept, or alternatively, by grounding their potentially challenged (and challenging) 'own' knowledge claims in the activities and values of other authoritative categories. Thus, for example, we saw how *Özlem* invokes in her aid CBAs which are oriented to learning in another, evidently more self-defined, context in order to establish herself as independent of the commonly-held category-bound descriptions. By employing such an identity claim, she is able to assert her right to define her version of 'doing being a student'.

Further, I showed how similarly constructed CBAs can perform subtly different discursal functions. Thus *Özlem* and *Carola* make use of superficially similar arguments about studying, yet the local management of meaning in each case demonstrates to what extent individual learning biographies make use of contextual knowledge and commonplace 'facts' to create a contextually highly sensitive narrative which is substantially coherent and interactively warranted.

The employment of an additional form of category-bound description, namely the **location category**, as a powerful contextualizing device in individual learning biographies, and its function as a vehicle for enrichment of narratives through the insertion of elements of time, indexicality and recognizable group/place identities, can be seen particularly well in *Carola's* learning biography.

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This completes the close analysis of Extracts from the interview corpus. In the next, and final, chapter, I shall attempt to draw out the broad results of the detailed analysis of extracts from this interview corpus and make connections between the interviews and my research questions.

## Chapter 9: Conclusions

At the outset of this dissertation, I asked: what discourses of learning and identity do students employ in relation to their individual learning histories, their experience of learning and of knowledge-acquisition in the HE environment? Further, I asked: how critically reflective students are of the positioning enacted through the dominant discourses of the HE environment with particular regard to institutional discourses of academic learning and knowledge? In examining and discussing the literature, I looked at the following areas:

- learning biographies/biographization of learning experience, produced in talk as a discontinuous narrative
- interaction as 'discourse'
- conversation as an orderly accomplishment of meaning in interaction
- the interview as a local context in which 'conversational' as well as institutional forms of interaction take place
- the role of the voices of significant others - embedded speech - in grounding learning narratives and participating in institutional discourses
- the relevance of interview data for the employment of discursive narratives in asymmetrical interaction
- the interactive context, talk and discourses of self

In an attempt now to draw together the main threads of this dissertation, linking the main areas of interest indicated in the Research Question with the discussion of the literature in the critical literature review, I shall in turn consider what this study has achieved by way of evidence regarding, firstly, the production of learning biographies in interview talk, while, secondly, the evidence produced in this study of the 'biographization' of students' talk and the significance of the analytical approach I

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have employed in order to produce these results is considered. Next, I discuss the development of learning discourse(s) in interaction, whereby I underline the coherence of students' discourse practices in relation to their experience of learning and argue that the student respondents negotiate the intrinsic difficulties of asymmetrical institutional talk by deploying a range of discourses, both institutionally-generated as well as individual discourses of resistance and opposition. It is on the basis of the evidence of individual discourse practices demonstrated in my data that I argue for a *low-inference approach* to data analysis and see my criticism of certain high-inference, 'ideological' approaches favoured by some representatives of discourse analysis (e.g. Michael Billig, or Norman Fairclough) largely justified. Fourthly and finally, I argue that the results produced by my analysis of the interview transcripts demonstrate the central importance of heteroglossic elements in talk, - here described as '*embedded speech*' and understood to function as a '*plausibility device*' - in the process of self-expression and the production of own discourse.

The implications of the results of this dissertation for the research community and its broad achievements and shortcomings as I see them are briefly discussed before I turn to a short review of the practical implications of the research for teaching practice and for the academic community as a whole.

As a final point, I indicate plans (at this stage) for the dissemination of the results of the research in various forms.

## **Theoretical conclusions**

### **Production of Learning Biographies**

I asked at the beginning of this dissertation: what particular relation do student (and pre-student) histories, appear to have to students' perceptions of course relevance and motivation to study? This investigation has been able to demonstrate the value of such a biographical approach to the study of learning experience. The extensive literature drawn upon (here I recall particularly the work of Hoerning, 1991; Alheit and Hoerning, 1989; and Krüger and Marotzki, <sup>2</sup>1996) has already established 'educational biography research' as an independent branch of educational sociology.

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The analysis carried out in this dissertation, however, has been able to demonstrate that a narrative and biographical approach to interview transcription data can be combined with detailed analysis of linguistic phenomena. The interviews I have analysed for this research consist of a series of discontinuous but robust biographical narratives with demonstrably recurrent features linked, it is legitimate to maintain, to the respondents' coherent production of meaningful narratives of experience and learning.

The learning biographies are a robust feature appearing throughout the corpus of interviews, consistently called upon by student respondents to convey explanations, evaluations and generalizing –theorizing arguments within an eminently flexible bodywork of story elements (Labov, 1972/1999). These last, are all the more significant in my data as the biographical narratives generated here were only in part directly elicited. Thus, the learning biography functions here, I maintain, as a continuous re-working of experience, bound to a specific interactional move and developed as a *control and confirmation of understanding* across turns and sequences of talk (Hoerning, 1989: 153-4; Sacks, 1992, II: 8).

#### **Evidence of 'biographization' of talk**

Continuing with the unfolding of the implicit questions implicated in my main Research Question, I asked: to what extent do the discourses of the university environment appear to be 'conversationalized' and 'naturalized' in students' talk? The question was posed against the background of a vital discussion located at the heart of recent discourse and conversation analytical debates around the role of the 'social' in discourse. In some senses this debate is unnecessarily reductive in its peremptory insistence on a dichotomy between the 'micro' dimension of local interaction and the 'macro' dimension of social forces. The re-working of experience in biographical garb appears in the data presented above as much more than either dimension is able to convey: the 'packaging' audibly occurring is rather an instance of an ongoing draft of that 'social semiotic', perhaps, that Halliday talks of (Halliday, 1978).

Students' talk draws on many and varied resources organised in an open-ended and necessarily incomplete way to create shared and contested frames of discourse,

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organized as biographical narratives of experience. Much as stories get told, as Sacks has suggested (Sacks, 1992, II: 12) because they are tellable and re-tellable, so the everyday theorizing involved in accounting for events and opinions is developed in narrativized and 'biographized' chunks of talk. The particular impetus of much biographized narrative, as demonstrated in the creation of stretches of shared discourse in *Marie's* interview data, can be understood as an expression of two phenomena described by Sacks and fully shared in the interpretation of the data presented here: namely, the co-selection of single linguistic elements as well as long turns and the 'storyability' of a topic as recipient-oriented and signalling understanding (Sacks, II: 19). Co-selection of words, of modality and prosodic pitch in the interview data presented here are a particularly convincing example of the ability of the learning biography to function as a mutually recognised and interactively constructed form of shared discourse.

#### **Structuring of self in biographies**

The extraordinary richness of the biographical narratives produced in the interaction of the interview are the source and resource of the students' construction of a whole series of discursive identities and discourse practices. Pre-work, pre-HE experience is elaborated in the case of all interview respondents (including all those whose data could not be transcribed for this dissertation) to a working, in-process discursive self. I have already argued that I accept here fully Ivanič's rejection of the idea of an 'own', largely static self attained at some point (Ivanič, 1997: 215-53) in favour of 'owned' voices, various changing socially constructed 'selves'. I argued above that a strong reason for taking this viewpoint is that a dominant impression communicated through the language data of the interviews is of *change* and of *passage* from earlier states of being and doing. If indeed I am right in hearing this in these students' talk, then this sense of passage must be understood as being intrinsically bound up with the students' production of learning discourses. The destination of this 'passage' or change' is certainly not mapped out ahead. Learning discourse, and learning to reflect on that 'learnt' discourse can be overheard here as evidence of the difficult work – hard interpersonal work at times –involved in negotiating identities across multiple contexts.

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Elliot, as we have already seen, makes the useful point in his analysis of interview data produced in talk with adult HE learners that the student self is a mix of fragility and resilience (Elliot, 1999: 60). This 'fragility' is put to the test by the asymmetrical interaction of the interview, and the student is often challenged, as the transcript extracts demonstrate over and over again, by the requirement to theorize and justify. They respond almost invariably, however, with resistant discourses and demonstrations of discursual resilience (for examples see particularly *Marie's* and *Carola's* talk).

I argued, too, above, that the interview participants have a "core story" to tell, following Mischler's work on life and education narratives, which is told as narrativized experience and "produced and developed through the interactional work of co-participants" in discourse practice (Mischler, 1997: 224). I argued that the interactional work Mischler refers to here takes place on various levels, including **within** the discourse of the speaker, or **within** the "core story" (Mischler, 1997: 234) the speaker has to 'tell'. This "core story" has been described convincingly as a "linguistically shaped learning process" (Krüger and Marotzki, <sup>2</sup>1996: 34) with strong elements of coherence and temporal organization (Linde, 1993; Capps and Ochs, 1994).

It is precisely the "core story" of interview respondents, I maintain, that is least attended to in the literature in the detail I have opted to adopt for this dissertation. The important collections of scholarly articles referred to frequently throughout this study which were edited under the title "*Student Biographies in Complex Institutions*" (Kokemohr and Marotzki, 1989; Marotzki and Kokemohr, 1990) as well as the volume "*Life story as Text – The Articulation of Problematic Educational Processes*"<sup>39</sup> edited by Koller and Kokemohr (1994), both based on detailed transcripts of student narratives in semi-structured interviews, are good examples of the strengths and weaknesses of previous research into learning biographies and discourses of learning in the HE environment. With the exception of the valuable contribution from Rehbein (Rehbein, 1989), in which the linguistic/discursive components of epistemic talk are analysed in close detail, the majority of the

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<sup>39</sup> [*Lebensgeschichte als Text. Zur biographischen Artikulation problematischer Bildungsprozesse*]

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contributions to these publications employ literary-rhetorical frameworks in their analysis (e.g. Schuller, 1994) which is substantially limited to a discussion of themes and content only. The very valuable theoretical insights into processes of 'biographization' of life experiences provided by authors such as Alheit, Marotzki and Hoerning are, too, heavily reliant on philosophical-hermeneutic or literary genres of analysis (Alheit, 1992; Alheit and Hoerning, 1989; Hoerning, 1989). The practitioners of discourse analysis are too numerous to recall here, but two contributors may be cited as further examples of DA approaches which either fail to go beyond respondents' simple utterances, taken as representative of 'reality' (Moir, 1993, on students' occupational career choices), or which concentrate their attention on the literary-semiotic content analysis of speech as texts (Gee, 1991 and his more recent introduction to discourse analysis Gee, 1999).

Elliot, cited above, combines interview data with a theoretical discussion of trends in life-long learning in an interesting and illustrative fashion (Elliot, 1999), yet his treatment of the students' talk he draws upon remains limited to superficial references to lexis or individual cases of style (Elliot, 1999: 49, 51, 58). Erika Haas argues convincingly that the class and gender barriers within the German HE system have altered little in the last 20 years (Haas, 1999). Her data, collected in structured narrative interviews, is reported in summarized form and presented in conventional literary form accompanied by sociological content analysis. No discursive-linguistic evidence is provided from the talk for the assertions regarding gender or class difference between and among the student respondents, nor is the language examined for elements of student-researcher reflexivity.

The approach to institutional talk which most resembles my own preoccupation is that described by Silverman and Peräkylä in their respective treatments of AIDS/HIV counselling interviews (Silverman, 1997; Peräkylä, 1995), because the CA approach to transcribed speech they adopt assures closest attention to the talk of the respondents *as they produced it* (with all due caution and awareness of the essentially incomplete nature of my attempts to record that talk as it happened) and therefore a high degree of *contextualization*. Nevertheless, their research site is radically different to the one chosen for the focus of this dissertation. Silverman and



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Peräkylä employ transcripts of structured institutional interaction. The counselling session is emphatically different, in structure and intent, from the semi-conversational ethnographic depth interview employed in this research.

Thus the literature provides examples of interview-based qualitative research with a research focus on study experiences, learning histories and crucial life events. The Hamburg symposia (Kokemohr and Marotzki, 1989; Marotzki and Kokemohr 1990), the work of Koller and Kokemohr (1994), Haas (1999), and that of Boettcher and Meer (2000) have already been cited more than once. All these studies have in common extensive transcript-based data and a concern with theoretical and practical topics that are also, in part, my concern. Yet – with few exceptions (Rehbein [1989] has already been mentioned in this connection) – they do not attend to the close-detail of interview exchanges and handle the language data as referential and 'factual'.

In this dissertation, I have chosen to employ the depth interview to collect students' talk in interaction with the institutional discourse of the researcher. I have attended to the detail of that interaction in order to examine the discourses of learning embedded in emerging, on-going biographical narratives the student respondents construct. Attention to the detail of the interview interaction entails close inspection of the turns and sequences of significant stretches of talk. These significant stretches of talk have been selected for analysis on the basis of successive waves of transcript coding, during which the focus of the analysis was refined to home in on those examples of discursal co-production where student discourses in harmony as well as in discord with institutional discourses could be plausibly identified. The decision to rely on detailed analysis of selected transcript extracts is justified on the basis, as remarked already above, of a *low-inference approach* to data analysis which seeks to generate plausible results from the local context in which the data are produced. By seeking to provide detailed evidence of biographization processes as they occur, I consider this study to have made an important contribution in a field of research still almost entirely untouched.

## **Development of Learning Discourses**

I posed the question: how critically reflective are students of the positioning enacted through the dominant discourses of the learning environment of the university, and what, if any, discourses of resistance or opposition do students oppose to dominant discourses of academic learning and knowledge? Further, I asked whether the HE-environment functions for the students in the case study as a 'discourse community'.

Respondents like *Marie* and *Carola* provide adequate data on this topic. Their experience of this form of positioning is documented. Their comments on the rationale behind the demands of the university are critical. They reflect on the sense, for themselves, of the university system and proffer theories of possible alternatives to the regime of exams, study years and inadequate learning assistance.

Their experience of learning as re-told in narratives of learning is developed as learning discourse. This discourse of learning is interactionally coherent, that is, its development in talk is contextually coherent and individually relevant; interwoven with a discontinuous narrative of personal experience and knowledge; it is not 'complete' or 'worked out', nor is it free of internal contradiction. Rather, it is characterized by impromptu features and is tentative. This tentative nature, which we may also describe as a form of candidate theorizing, is presumably explicable through the function such a discourse of learning performs in the kind of (asymmetrical) institutional interaction occurring in the cases investigated here. The learning discourse is a response to the knowledge systems/academic discourses brought to bear on the student at different levels of their HE experience: in the immediate context of the interview, in the larger context of the long sequence of interaction with the interviewer over and above the research interview experience, by the university environment and its multiple demands, by the student community and peer-group (category-bound) meanings, by the larger social, professional and familial context of 'doing being a student'.

A further result of the analysis carried out on the interviews is the evidence that students' learning discourses exhibit significant elements of category membership, i.e. the individual discourses exhibit evidence of respondents giving accounts for

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activities as a member of a category, e.g. respondent, student, Turkish student (Baker 1997; Lepper 2000). Among the recognizable discourse types the data provides evidence of, the following are the most significant:

- specifically student-oriented Learning Discourses, associated with discourses of learning *method* and study conditions;
- academic/staff-oriented Learning Discourses, associated with 'problems talk' and discursial resistance;
- criticism of learning/teaching encounters (contact with professors, examinations);
- discourses of accommodation to the university learning system and its regime of exams, presentation styles and specialist areas of knowledge (e.g. banking vs. logistics, marketing and business IT);
- sense of self developed in open theorizing and evaluative discourse.

#### Learning Discourses and Self

Deploying discourse in order to assume or reject a specific local identity is probably the most important facet of interaction at all times, and in the case of the asymmetrical interaction we have been looking at here, it is arguably the most complex and most risk-laden work of communication the discourse members are involved in at any time. 'Self' and the members' position and identity in interaction are at the heart of this work.

At the outset I asked the following question with regard to the intermeshing action of discourse practices and students' sense of 'self': what do students' discourses in talk, captured in unstructured interviews and observed in learning situations, audio-taped and transcribed and stored in electronic corpora, reveal about students' sense of self and self-development, their experience of learning and of discourse-acquisition in the HE environment?

#### 'Embedded speech' and 'open theorizing'

Above all else, a central position is occupied in the findings of this dissertation by

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the **embedded speech** employed throughout the interview corpus. I have chosen to call this phenomenon a *plausibility device*, in the CA sense that the recourse to others' voices and other-own voices in the telling of personal accounts represents a method of solving a number of communicative requirements in an extremely efficient and powerful way: tellability, as a fishing device, as a hedging device, as a distancing and simultaneously a shared discourse (shared with significant others to whom a plea is made which is warranted within a logic of out-of-frame discourse). Exploiting in this way own and others' discourses and stepping out of frame, effortlessly linking multiple contexts of experience, the students here are heard to develop what I have opted to call *open theorizing*. This type of theoretical work is open-ended and fluid in the sense that it is inherently embedded in ongoing, if discontinuous, narrative processes. The significance of this meaning-making practice lies here in the accomplished control exercised over their discourse by the student respondents when unfolding stretches of many-voiced talk. On the basis of my findings here I feel it is warranted to claim that we are reading and hearing here significant examples of individual discourse production. Secondly, the extracts examined in detail have shown convincingly, I feel, that resistance to 'institutional' discourses of learning and knowledge acquisition, whether they are brought forward by the interviewer here or raised in the interview talk, is consistently supported by having recourse to out-of-frame discourses which lend **plausibility** and **agency** to students' alternative discourses. Thirdly, and finally, the particular function of embedded speech as a plausibility device is especially significant, it seems, for theorizing in an asymmetrical (power) relationship. The hedging and interactional pragmatic character of deploying and marshalling others' experience or the distancing effect of narrativizing events and processes is, I suggest, significant for its accomplishment of shared understanding in talk. Students resist the institutional discourses, uncompromisingly at times, certainly, but the interviews in my corpus more frequently than otherwise demonstrate the students' avoidance of dispreferred topics, where possible - and where permitted, in their evaluation of the institutional 'risks' involved in the interview context.

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**'Embedded speech' and inter-contextuality in talk**

In the critical literature review (Chapter 2), the three-dimensional model of discourse practices developed by Fairclough (Fairclough, 1989: 25, 29) was introduced in order to underline the intermeshing contexts at work in talk. Fairclough, for example, differentiates between 'situational', 'institutional' and 'societal' contexts of discourse practice (1989: 164). The results of the data analysis I have presented above suggest that students' talk, particularly where layering and embedding of others' or their own out-of-frame talk are deployed, is *discursively inter-contextual*. Embedded speech - in the data presented here - is the single most significant device of inter-contextuality, by means of which discursial resources from a range of personal, interpersonal, institutional and societal experiences and knowledge can be marshalled.

**Embedded speech** in the interviews used here may thus be divided into three broad types:

- (a) reported own speech or thought-as-speech
- (b) reported or purported 'other' speech or thought-as-speech
- (c) 'projectable' or 'potential' speech

Both types (a) and (b) are capable of crossing interactional (and societal) contexts by exploiting referential or 'factual' resources from shared or know-able contexts. They serve, as I have pointed out already, as powerful plausibility devices, 'grounding' talk in plausible experience. The third type, however, while making use of both (a) and (b), employs the 'real' or the 'projectable' in order to *theorize*. Shared projectables (referring to 'common knowledge', plausible outcomes, generalizations and commonplaces) may have a substantially referential and descriptive function and are employed in *deductive theorizing* (generalizing from experience). Assumed or hypothetical projectables (which may be purely speculative, yet are grounded in talk in projected experience or imagined speech/thought) are likely to be employed in *inductive theorizing*, whereby the respondent proposes an own discourse and tests it in the interactional context.

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**Prosody, modality and category membership in discourse**

In addition to the role played by heteroglossic elements of embedded speech, the analysis of the interview transcripts shows how the students' talk is linguistically and discursively structured. Prosodic devices, modality in individual turns and moves of talk, hedging devices and socially marked or institutionally weighted lexis have been shown here to perform the function in talk of negotiating the inter-discursive roles played out in interview 'conversation'. Institutional roles (student-expert, learner, lecturer) are meshed closely with more individual frames of personal meaning-making in talk. The analysis of the interview data provides clear evidence of the students' employment of both individual discourses of learning and knowledge-acquisition as well as academic and professional discourses, essentially entered into and negotiated as discourses of significant other-categories (e.g. professionalized discourses at the border between studies and work, or the language adopted when addressing members of university staff). In this mesh of discourse practices, own discourses as well as resistance to the discourse of the institution and its representatives can be developed and 'risked'.

The close analysis of interview transcripts which make an attempt – never more than approximative, naturally - to include as much of the unfinishedness and reciprocity of the turns of talk as heard and re-hearable on tape, then, permits us to describe the fashioning of own discourse. The presentation of self in talk is discursively structured and must be heard as intrinsically embedded in that talk. Lisa Capps and Elinor Ochs express this complex state of contingent self-discourse thus: "... our present identities evolve out of complex temporally, linguistically and interactionally organized communicative encounters" (Capps and Ochs, 1995: 14).

***Limitations of the research***

In the course of this investigation, much that was originally planned in the earlier stages of the work could not be carried out. Despite what has been achieved, much remains to be done and there is much that could be developed.

**Size of the corpus**

Most importantly, the size of the corpus falls far short of original projections. While

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most of these last were ultimately unrealistic, and while it is now clear that the progressive re-focussing on feasible research (and particularly, transcription) aims was an invaluable part of the iterative research process, and much in the way of clarity about research aims and methods could be clarified on the way, a larger corpus would allow greater scope for the investigation with computer-assisted qualitative data analytical (CAQDAS) methods. A significant factor in the construction of the corpus, however, has been the increasing depth of the close analysis deemed necessary and subsequently undertaken. The size of the corpus, then, reflects an uneven and uneasy, though highly productive, compromise between the detailed examination of selected extracts in the more or less 'traditional' CA fashion with a larger, narrative-biographical - and therefore 'whole-corpus' approach, which, I am certain, is justified on the grounds of the quality of the analysis it has so far permitted me to develop, and is warranted by the pluri-dimensional discursive understanding that has driven my research from early on.

#### **Other areas**

Observation is significantly under-represented in this research. More systematic observation of more than the half-dozen lectures I attended could have provided significant additional insights into understandings and interpretations offered in the interviews. The seminars and 'Kolloquia' (finalists' pre-examination seminars) in which student numbers are significantly reduced in comparison to the larger, often huge, lecture audiences, would certainly have provided detail about learning methods and student/staff behaviours which would have added significantly to my knowledge of the site. It had been my intention from the start to try to get to know at first-hand as many aspects of students' learning routines as possible. The Kolloquia, the preparation for presentations delivered in the presence of prestigious university Professors, the pre-Diploma period and the post-completion period of the final Diploma-Dissertation were constant topics in casual conversations as well as in the interviews. Likewise, some closer familiarization with the Lerngruppe-practices of some students would certainly have proved enlightening and could be considered as a separate subject for observational or group-interview data collection aiming to complement the data collected here.

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Thicker description, making use, for example, of wider numerical data on a larger student reference cohort, including personal data, course choices, career paths, VET, etc., was an option I could not take up. The studies referred to below (Köster 1995 and Köster and Matzat 1997) are already available for the same university with regard to drop-out quotas and length of study. My own data, including both the complete collection of audio-recordings, transcribed and still untranscribed, and the quantitative data I have on the students who have passed through my courses over the last eight years, possess a certain potential here. The re-alignment of aims in this research excluded much of this data at a very early stage.

Another area which could certainly have profited from more attention – but which would have claimed considerable space in the final dissertation – is that of the intercultural pragmatics of institutional communication. The interplay of intercultural understandings (and misunderstandings, of course) were only lightly skimmed over here. The inclusion of a greater element of intercultural analysis would most likely, however, have produced a radically different text, and the knowledge that this would most likely be the outcome tended from the outset to abet the suppression of anything not absolutely necessary. It remains clear, however, that much of the interactive work going on in these interviews is only understandable *interculturally* and that in many cases, no doubt, the element of intercultural accommodation to the 'other' (albeit operating *monolingually* throughout) acts to distort to some extent the co-participants' *own-cultural* discourse practices. But that is only to underline the thrust of this dissertation, i.e. that in interaction discourse is co-produced and conditioned by the *many* contexts operating on the talk.

What *has* been achieved, however, is the closer description of fine-detailed interaction, a departure from the rhetorically-tuned literary analyses commonly found (e.g. Schuller 1994).

This has important implications for the discussion about interview data and "relevance". The discussion between Billig and Schegloff (Billig 1999a, 1999b; Schegloff 1999a, 1999b) touched on in the literature review revolves around the question of the representativeness of analytical conclusions drawn from extracts of



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transcribed data. Such limited extracts, it is argued, cannot reflect the broader context of the talk in social interaction. The counter argument runs to the effect that bringing the social to the close interaction of the local context is to impose interpretations irrelevant to the producers, i.e. not produced intentionally and consciously by respondents.

My decision to combine close detail of interaction to an interpretation of turn-taking and sequencing in talk which takes account of the longer sequences of interpersonal communication over time, through others' talk and through elicited responses to the interview agenda of the researcher, can, I am convinced, supply an important element of contextualization to the interaction under investigation.

The highly detailed look at talk made possible by the particular combination of analytical tools employed here – discourse analysis and conversation analysis – provides rich contextual detail. Indeed, it seems likely that much more remains to be found in the transcripts constructed and analysed here than I was able to develop within the scope of this dissertation. The data explored in the chapter devoted to *Marie*, in particular, demonstrates clearly that the rich contextual detail of this encounter is attainable without having recourse to high-level inference and that a careful, in Seale's (1999:153) words "fallibilistic" study of students' talk is achievable and delivers results that speak eloquently of the skilful accomplishment of meaning in talk.

### ***Practical implications of this research***

#### **a) For teaching practice**

There is little evidence at present that the German HE sector is open to the discussion of new teaching/learning ideas. The universal atmosphere of the 70s and 80s and the discourses of learning operating then (see Krüger et al 1988, Bargel et al 1989) are not noticeably present today. Recent literature (Boettcher and Meer 2000, Haas 1999) emphasize the stresses and strains, underline the inefficiencies and deficiencies in learning structures and practices, and draw attention to the difficulties faced by students in deciding to study, choosing courses, passing examinations and achieving grades to get jobs. Eternal problems, one might comment. What is new, however, is

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the overall trend within this literature to an accommodation with the sort of pervasive "technologization" of the learning experience that Norman Fairclough has written about (Fairclough 1995a:102-11, 1996a, 2000) or the "disembodiment" of the student within an increasingly commercialized "learning business" which was referred to at the outset of this dissertation (Evans and Hall 1995). The reforms which are spurting and spreading within the HE sector in Germany are largely "technological" in Fairclough's sense. They aim to increase outputs, to improve the HE-Business "fit" through 'benchmarking' practices perhaps (Weule 1999), or by introducing work-placement periods for all students (Schoser 1999), are, in a word, human capital solutions to the question of study-outcomes (Goldsmith 1984, Woodall 1987).

The interviews documented a range of topics on which student criticism of university processes are particularly valid. Common learning discourses have been identified, for example, in relation to initial adjustment difficulties students experience in their first semesters in connection with the acquisition of the institutional discourses of the academic environment. Learning strategies, e.g. study groups, self-organization, adaptation to the exam-cycle rhythm, time planning and pragmatic learning for results is another area of obvious concern in students' talk. Criticism of inadequate staff/student contact and academic assistance and complaints about the anonymity of study experiences, as well as dissatisfaction with course content are all repeated aspects of the critical discourses students' produce in my data.

On the positive side, my data also provides evidence of common discourses of learning. The successful management of the preliminary course phase commonly led to a growth in self-confidence, matched by greater control over the course and sequence of studies. A sense of skills-acquisition in relation to knowledge-management and data-handling skills is a common description of the process of becoming, and effectively 'doing being', a student.

#### **b) For the academic community and the discussion of HE reform**

A further point to consider is to what extent the student respondents' age and gender play a role in forming their discourses of learning and developing the specific course of their learning biographies. For, as other researchers have illustrated in recent

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studies, learning experiences and acceptance/resistance to institutional discourses (particularly gendered discourses associated with specific degree courses and modes of study) are clearly significantly linked to the social position of the individual student in relation to the institution university/college (Elliot 1999, Haas 1999, Ivanič 1998). The students in my cohort are interesting from a comparative point of view, as by European standards they must certainly be reckoned among the most 'mature'. The average age of the 24 interviewees in my total collection of audio-taped interviews was 25 at the time of the interview. The average age of the 7 respondents examined in detail here was 27. Of the seven, the oldest was 30, and she like 5 others had completed a full industrial/commercial vocational training before proceeding to study at DU University. Current official statistics inform us that the average age of finalists (and the students in my cohort are all near-finalists) in German HE institutions is 28.9 years (Hahlen 1999:25). As already remarked, Elliot has recently pointed out the importance of turning our attention in the provision and planning of HE teaching to the requirements and particular social learning situations of students (Elliot 1999). In the future, when new courses and qualifications are designed with the intention of aligning German HE education more with the BA/MA models of the anglo-saxon HE environment, it would be a desirable spin-off of such reform were the interests and learning experiences of future students to be taken as much into account as the supposed interests of the business community currently are. A pious hope, I suspect.

#### ***Plans for dissemination***

Basing my remarks here on the Guidelines published by the British Educational Research Association (March 2000) I see plans for the dissemination of this research in the following perspective:

- 1) my primary audience is the academic research community. The relevance for policy-makers is extremely limited in this form and the text was not written with them in mind. Dissemination of the dissertation in its complete form or in part(s) will necessarily (and decidedly) be targeted at the research community with the aim of obtaining researcher critique and to contribute to the body of research already in existence in relation to this and related educational and social science topics.

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- 2) the dissertation should be made available to the research community in full.  
The most likely place of publication in its present state will be on an existing internet site, on an own professional website created for this purpose and linked to my home university and other sites (e.g. the Open University) or on the internet site of an online journal e.g. Fachzeitschrift "Gesprächsforschung Online-Zeitschrift zur verbalen Interaktion" at [www.ozs-gespraechsforschung.de](http://www.ozs-gespraechsforschung.de) ("Conversation Analysis – Online Journal for Verbal Interaction")
- 3) Academic papers arising out of the full dissertation and focussing on significant parts of the research (e.g. Combining CAQDAS and CA; Constructing an electronic corpus of interview language; Learning Biographies and CA analysis – problems and potentials; Embedded speech and learning discourses; Discourse and the voices of significant others in the HE environment) will be considered for submission to refereed journals for peer scrutiny.
- 4) The preparation of the whole or part of the corpus of interviews in tagged form for CD-R dissemination (electronic speech archives, e.g. Oxford) including selected audio extracts linked to interview extracts. On-line provision of the whole corpus for downloading from a web-site, as at 2 above. State-of-the-art sound-cards and software are still not in a position to process audio-files the size of the interviews in my corpus. As and when a solution is found that is technically feasible, the online-setup of the whole corpus will be considered, as in this way the requirement of making the research available in the public domain would be fully satisfied.

## **Last words**

Thus, the student respondents interviewed here reported significant – and at times, monstrous – hurdles placed in their way over the course of a full diploma degree course of studies at a German University to attain the academic qualification of 'Dipl.-Betriebwirt/in'<sup>40</sup> (or more rarely 'Dipl.-Volkswirt/in'<sup>41</sup>). These difficulties included length of studies (currently running at between 9.8 and 13.6 semesters – Hahlen 1999:25), time-planning to get through each examination in the right sequence within the given time-limits, overfilled lectures, at best inadequate academic assistance from staff, an almost complete lack of contact to the faculty, a marked stress on the learning of 'facts' or prescribed texts with little or no critical reflexion, and a significant mis-fit between the required acquisition of a body of theoretical knowledge on the one hand, and the markedly practical career-oriented performance requirements and market-orientation of aspirations on the other.

The extent to which studying may or may not have equipped each individual for a successful career remains – despite considerable evidence in the affirmative – at this point largely imponderable, and in most respects of secondary importance. For, one of the central impulses behind much of the counter-discourse the student respondents developed in these interviews seemed to be coming from a fundamental uncertainty shared by the institution itself. Namely, the lack of clarity about what the university should be doing at all. The university, notwithstanding this chronic uncertainty as to its contemporary role in society and the economy, does not, however, function primarily as a vocational training institution, nor even as a higher professional institute. It does produce members of the professions, certainly, yet its main emphasis remains firmly placed – to date – on the "*Wissenschaftlichkeit*"/academic science of its teaching. Against this template, the students I interviewed justifiably raised their voices in protest, in frustration and sometimes in resignation, at the sheer abstraction or academicity of much they were asked to learn and reproduce.

It is perhaps this mis-match of aims and desires that has been made hearable in the analysis conducted above. The fact of their protest or approval is obvious, banal

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<sup>40</sup> Diploma in Business Administration (Diplomaed Business Administrator, male or female)

<sup>41</sup> Diploma in Economics (Diplomaed Economist, male or female)

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even. The **verbalization in discourse** of their experience, whatever the deficits of the university and its course arrangements, is more than an airing of frustration. Every individual interviewed here – *Marie, Carola, Özlem, Laleh, Sara, Henry, Torsten*, and all the rest who did not get to speak here – was in the process of recasting their past and their present in an on-going, open-ended, powerful, frequently lucid, often uncertain, yet fundamentally self-defining learning narrative of which the university years have already become a defining and ineradicable part.

## APPENDIX 1

### ***Preparing the data***

As soon as the transcription of interviews began, the time-estimations were proven to be more or less realistic which were assumed at the beginning of the initial study: between 15 and 20 hours transcription per hour of recorded talk. The main difficulties, however, were difficulties of quality (quality of recordings) and immediate questions of interpretation. As Joan Swann writes, speaking for transcribers everywhere:

"...a transcript provides a partial record; it cannot faithfully reproduce every aspect of talk. Transcribers will tend to pay attention to different aspects depending upon their interests, which means that a transcript is already an interpretation of the event it seeks to record" (Swann 1994:39).

Parallel readings influenced drastically my employment and continual revision of transcription conventions. If, at the outset, I was more interested in as faithfully as possible reproducing the *words said* and the dynamics of turn-taking as an indicator of participation in the dialogue of the interview and of underlying symmetries/asymmetries between researcher and student respondent, as I continued to read and transcribe and listen, the complexity of the task grew clearer and the interpretive choices confronting me multiplied.

### **Translation options - again**

Translation, in a narrower sense is central here. The majority of the transcripts are in German. Analysis is conducted on the German language data, and examples must necessarily be explained in relation to their linguistic and discourse function in

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German speech/discourse. Presentation of the data and the findings therefore presents some interesting hurdles to surmount. Halliday relates (1989: 6) Malinowski's approach to this matter with the Trobrianders:

"In presenting the texts, Malinowski adopted various methods. He gave a free translation, which was intelligible, but conveyed nothing of the language or the culture; and a literal translation, which mimicked the original, but was unintelligible to an English reader".

The solution was an extensive commentary of both. Something of the kind proved necessary here, too. Given the technical difficulties of presenting German and English in a word-for-word type translation on account of radically different syntactical structure, and embedded morphological problems<sup>42</sup>, not to mention the problematic nature of exemplifying features of meaning and discourse by recourse to de-contextualised translations<sup>43</sup>.

#### Mark-up options

On top of the transcription and translation of the interviews came the preparation for analysis with TACT. This meant additional 'tagging' in the text, to allow TACT to filter and group, produce concordances, frequency counts, statistics, etc. Adding the TACT 'markup', as with the development of transcription needs as the analysis progresses, is a process based on forethought. For an efficient analysis by TACT of a given text, the text should be in the best, 'cleanest' possible condition, if TACT is not to count every last hyphen, spelling mistake, alternative transcription sign, leftovers from a previous wave of transcription since abandoned, and so on.

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<sup>42</sup> Suzanne Romaine points out the embeddedness of grammatical gender in languages like German which "leave associations between grammatical gender and connotations of meaning derived from attitudes towards men and women" (Romaine, 1997: 65).

<sup>43</sup> Ruth Wodak uses mixed methods, but gives sequential translation of blocks of conversation, which has the advantage, to be sure of maintaining the meanings in context in the second language, but also has the disadvantage of distancing the translated version from the original words. Given that she simultaneously renders the original German-Austrian talk in an approximate attempt at Austrian dialect, the relation between German text and English text becomes extremely tenuous. She then compounds this muddle even further by citing examples of the discourse she is investigating in the second language, with little back-reference to the language forms in which the items of discourse are linguistically embedded (Wodak, 1997). Michael Stubbs, too, has levelled criticisms at Wodak's lack of sensitivity towards blurring of meaning across language lines (Stubbs, 1996b: 108).



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A set of basis 'tags' employed at the outset were: SP = speaker + name initials (e.g. CO for *Carola*: <SPCO>); GF and GM for "gender female" or "gender male"; ND and NO for "nationality deutsch" and "nationality other"; AB = "*Ausbildung*" (apprenticeship or pre-university training). Any number of further tags can be, and as the corpus grew, some were employed. Clearly, the texts stored on a PC with this information bear little resemblance to a readable record of talk. Transcription symbols (see Appendix 2 below) are – in part – marked up as needed, in order that intonation, turn-taking, stress and quoted speech, for instance, may be included in the analysis.

#### The electronic corpus and working with MonoConc and TACT<sup>44</sup>

The electronic corpus thus created contains 40000 words. A small corpus still, yet already large enough to carry out illustrative searches for varied data categories. Apart from storing the corpus in text-form as it was 'fed' in, TACT creates a database which produces a word-list (Fig.4), listed alphabetically and with the number of occurrences for each word, or that which TACT recognises as a word, e.g. truncated words, hesitation and hedging signals in written form, and so on.

ab (11)	from
abbrechen (1)	break up/off
abei (1)	(truncated or faulty entry)
abendessen (1)	evening meal
abends (2)	in the evening, evenings
aber (159)	but
abgefertigt (1)	finished off
abgefragt (4)	asked, checked, tested
abgegangen (3)	gone down, away, off, etc
abgehen (1)	go down, away, etc
abgelehnt (1)	refused, turned down
abgelenkt (1)	distracted
abgeschlossen (1)	finished, completed
abgeschreckt (1)	shocked, frightened off, away
abgesehen (2)	apart (from), overlooked
abgesetzt (1)	put down, dropped off
abgetaucht (1)	gone under, disappeared
abgewandert (1)	wandered off
abhaengig (2)	dependent
abhaengt (1)	depends (on)
abitur (13)	Abitur, school-leaving exam
abiturienten (1)	school leavers (Grammar only)

<sup>44</sup> For all the operations with TACT described here see Ian Lancashire (1996) *Using TACT with Electronic Texts. A Guide to Text-Analysis Computing Tools*, New York, MLA.

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abkommandiert (1) sent off, ordered away

Fig. 1

*Complete Word List: Alphabetic listing with frequency in corpus*

Out of this list individual words or groups of words (here the categories), according to the aims of the research, may be selected and group-files are formed (\*.lst files in TACT). As an example, the .lst file "*Professor*", selected through the TACT Query function (see below) specifying that references to any words containing the word-stem '*Professor.\**', employing the wildcard (.) should be selected when co-occurring with the Tag reference "Gender=F (Female), i.e. in the interviews conducted with *Laleh*, *Sara* and *Carola* only. Fig. 2 gives the result of this search in extract form (and considerably 'cleaned up'), with the key word '*Professor/s/en*' underscored and in heavy type. The display form selected is 'Variable Context' (see below), and the context fixed on is three lines of the transcription text before and after the chosen word or words.

Reference to university professors by Gender Female respondents only  
Variable Context 3 Lines to either side of group word.

(2267)  
schoen einfach weil es einfach nur Auswendiglernen von wahnsinnig grossen  
Mengen <LPAUSE B> finde ich <MP>eigentlich mittlerweile nicht mehr so  
interessant weil es einfach wirklich vorgefertigt ist wirklich die Meinung  
des **Professors** wiedergeben muss um eine vernuenftige Note zu bekommen und es  
ist ueberhaupt nicht gefragt dass ich meine Meinung schreibe und das finde  
ich mittlerweile nicht so klasse und wuerde auch mittlerweile nicht  
Wirtschaft studieren

(2340)  
Problem ist dass <LPAUSE B> also was ich <LPAUSE B> ich muss weiter ausholen  
<LPAUSE B> wo ich hier in Duisburg angefangen hab' war ich in dieser  
Einfuehrungsveranstaltung und <LPAUSE B> stand dann ich weiss nicht welcher  
**Professor** das war es ist glaube ich egal es wurde uns Studenten die in  
Duisburg angefangen hatten Wirtschaft zu studieren gesagt dass <LPAUSE B> im  
Grundstudium Dreiviertel ausgesiebt werden das wurde wortwoertlich gesagt  
<ESp B>von Ihnen wird ein Viertel

(2474)  
kann darueber irgendwann ein Buch darueber schreiben und eine Anleitung zum  
Studieren herausbringen oder wie es in den Wirtschaftswissenschaften oder so  
was aber <HES B> ich selbe kann gar nichts zu man ist einfach vom **Professor**  
abhaengig und man irgendwie glaube ich <LPAUSE B> nicht seiner Meinung sagen  
kann <LPAUSE B> kommt allmaelig zugute also ich denke nicht dass man man  
muss sich einfach zwangsweise in das System integrieren fuer sich

(2505)  
gehe besuche zig Vorlesungen weil man <MP>halt wirklich fuer zwei Klausuren  
die Vorlesungen lernen muss das sind sechzehn Stunden <HES B> ist man  
<MP>halt damit beschaeftigt diesen Stoff fuer die Klausur zu lernen das ist  
dann genau das was der **Professor** moechte also viel Zeit dass ich fuer mich  
noch Literatur lese die mich interessiert hab' ich nicht vielleicht mal

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nebenbei irgendwie was aber grossartig fuer sich selbst da reinarbeiten hab'  
ich <MP>eigentlich keine Zeit gehabt  
(2524)  
<MP>eigentlich das Gefuehl von den Lehrenden dass die Studenten ihnen  
grosstenteils egal sind weil was mir teilweise auffaellt was ich in BWL  
finde ich das <MP>eigentlich staerker als in VWL die VWL- **Professoren** fand  
ich sehr angenehm in den Sprechstunden waren auch <MP>eigentlich sehr nett  
und die Fragen nett beantwortet und waren auch nicht von obenherab <LPAUSE  
B> das war in VWL so wobei da auch nicht sehr viel Studenten sind

Fig. 2

*Extract from Group list: "Professor. \*" by Gender Female*

Working then with these categories, - which may contain only one word, - the operations possible with TACT (and with MonoConc) are carried out:

*kwik-concordances* (key word-in-context concordances where the chosen word is listed according to parameters the user sets, by author, by word, by place in text, etc. Figure 3 shows an extract from such a KWIK-concordance, drawn out from the complete word list, including every reference to the key word by all respondents and myself using the word field 'Ausbildung/ausbilden': 'vocational training'/train' (see here the spelling mistake detected, but not correctable, by TACT: AusbildING, instead of AusbildUNG). Figure 4 gives the same word field for the respondent *Laleh* only.

**ausbilden** (1)  
(1193) hatte ich noch | angerufen was die **ausbilden** und hatte ich den |  
**ausbildung** (1)  
(1646) <HES> | <ESpB>da mache ich meine **Ausbildung** und dann will ich |  
**ausbildung** (49)  
(502) Oder sie haben zumindest eine **Ausbildung** die | jungen Damen  
(650) | Hausfrau geendet gelandet - keine **Ausbildung** gemacht | zufaellig  
(673) ich | mich beworben ich wollte eine **Ausbildung** haben machen | Mein  
(729) M><N O> Sie sahen sich schon in der **Ausbildung** | <QI> | <SP  
(737) teilweise auch bewusst dass diese **Ausbildung** | allein dafuer  
(1078) geguckt und | da haben Sie diese **Ausbildung** bei wo war das  
(1209) Abitur | gemacht habe dann eine **Ausbildung** als  
(1361) Jahre Der aelteste hat auch eine **Ausbildung** zum |  
(1367) Und | er ist dann <HES> nach der | **Ausbildung** hat er ein Studium  
(1567) | Regel dann nach der Abitur eine **Ausbildung** zu machen | <QI> |  
(1603) | studieren aber ich wollte diese **Ausbildung** | zwischendurch

Fig. 3

*Extract from KWIK "Ausbildung" (Vocational training- apprenticeship) by line and frequency*

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### LALEH AUSBILDUNG KWIK

(516)            Oder sie haben zumindest eine **Ausbildung** die | jungen Damen  
(668)        | Hausfrau geendet gelandet - keine **Ausbildung** gemacht | zufaellig  
(692)        ich | mich beworben ich wollte eine **Ausbildung** haben machen | Mein  
(756)        teilweise auch bewusst dass diese **Ausbildung** | allein dafuer  
(1219)       hatte ich noch | angerufen was die **ausbilden** und hatte ich den |

Fig. 4

### *Complete KWIK for "Ausbildung" by line and frequency for LALEH only*

The same categories can be viewed in "variable context" as was shown above with the example of the group list 'Professor.\*' by Gender, whereby the context before and after the word (given in 'lines before and after') can be selected. This allows a very flexible focussing on the immediate context of the selected item. Equally, the whole text can be viewed with the selected word list or category list highlighted for view. The display option in TACT contains a menu for the modification of the various display types, a text distribution display giving the percentual distribution occurrence of a word or words over the chosen text in graphic form and the collocation option which is illustrated below in Figures 5-7.

*collocations*<sup>45</sup>: TACT calculates for selected single items or word-groups their frequency of occurrence in the text corpus, the other lexical items together with which (in a variable context) the original word appears in order of decreasing frequency and the significance calculated statistically of such collocations. This can be a highly sensitive tool for probing the significance of relationships in text, grammatical structures, fixed phrases and sayings, etc. Figs.5-7 illustrate the collocations of the word "AUSBILDUNG" for *Laleh* within spans of 5 words, 2 words and 1 word respectively. In fact, at first sight, little that comes out in these three collocation tables would appear to be of any great interest or significance as it stands. A natural next step in TACT would be to combine the selected key word with other possible key words, conceptually or linguistically linked to one another (a qualitative/quantitative step this, relying on a priori as well as a posteriori method). Figures 5-7 would suggest a first tentative search in the collocations of 'Ausbildung' with 'Hausfrau' (housewife), and the question of the relationship in *Laleh's* learning

<sup>45</sup> Collocations are "the recurrent co-occurrence of words" according to John Sinclair (cited by Clear, 1993: 277)

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biography of 'training' and 'luck, chance' ('zufaellig'; 'gelandet'; 'angerufen') and the influence of 'powerful' outsiders, as well as the reference to awareness and being 'alone'. The potential as well as the limitations of collocational searches is discussed at length and highly instructively by Jeremy Clear and his insistence on a "rigorous, data-driven and bottom-up analysis" (Clear, 1993: 277) applies fully here. Therefore, words and their collocates in this corpus have, as yet, a certain impressionistic value only, not always passing Clear's rigorous threshold value of co-occurrence on more than three occasions (1993: 277).

## Laleh AUSBILDUNG COLLOCATION 5:5

Collocates	Sel. Node	Collocate Freq	Type Freq	Z-score	
ausgereicht		1	1	20.750	sufficient
geendet		1	1	20.750	finished
gelandet		1	1	20.750	landed
angerufen		1	2	14.639	called
bewusst		1	2	14.639	aware
damen		1	2	14.639	ladies
hausfrau		1	2	14.639	housewife
zumindest		1	2	14.639	at least
allein		1	3	11.925	alone
jungen		1	4	10.304	young
beworben		1	5	9.195	applied
eignungstest		1	5	9.195	suitability test
zufaellig		1	5	9.195	by chance
dafuer		1	8	7.218	for that
traum		1	8	7.218	dream
frauen		1	14	5.380	women

Fig. 5 (Extract) Collocation for "Ausbildung" 5 words left and right of key word: Laleh only

## Laleh AUSBILDUNG COLLOCATION 2:2

Collocates	Sel. Node	Collocate Freq	Type Freq	Z-score	
gelandet		1	1	32.854	landed
zumindest		1	2	23.210	at least
allein		1	3	18.934	alone
jungen		1	4	16.383	young
zufaellig		1	5	14.640	by chance
dafuer		1	8	11.542	for that
keine		1	36	5.303	not any
wollte		1	36	5.303	wanted
eine		2	155	4.922	a
diese		1	45	4.703	these
gemacht		1	61	3.978	did
hatte		1	76	3.513	had
machen		1	84	3.316	do

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haben	1	165	2.178	have
die	2	560	2.087	the
dass	1	177	2.076	that
was	1	187	1.998	was
und	1	644	0.532	and

Mini-text: 20. Total Text: 21627.

**Fig. 6**

*Complete Collocation "Ausbildung" 2 words left and right of key word Laleh only*

#### Laleh AUSBILDUNG COLLOCATION 1:1

Collocates	Sel.	Collocate	Type	Z-score	
	Node	Freq	Freq		
allein		1	3	26.814	alone
diese		1	45	6.795	these
gemacht		1	61	5.795	did
die		2	560	3.467	the
haben		1	165	3.357	have
und		1	644	1.306	and

Mini-text: 10. Total Text: 21627.

**Fig. 7**

*Complete Collocation "Ausbildung" 1 word left and right of key word Laleh only*

Query function:

TACT allows a large number of queries to be carried out on the whole corpus or on selected sections of the corpus selected and nominated as separate groups. For the purposes of the initial study, only the following main query forms were employed:

.*	Wild card, standing for any letter, syllable or root of a word e.g. sag.* for any word beginning with "sag" (i.e. say, said, saying, etc.)
or	Separator defining adjacency by co-occurrence in order given; multiple adjacency bar allows the search for relative proximity, e.g. ich    mich (I   other word  myself, for reflexive verbs in context
, or &	Selecting lists or co-occurrences of words (e.g. sag.*, denk.* glaub.* - list all words containing roots of 'say', 'think', 'believe', etc.)
.*; when	List words (only) where co-occurring with an 'operator' (e.g. 'Gender', 'Speaker', 'Nationality', 'Interview No.', etc)

One last example of the basic search methods which TACT (and MonoConc) make possible is the retrieval of tags, understood as simple open codes (Kelle 1995 and 2000, Fielding and Lee 1998). The code <ESp> for **embedded speech** can be

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searched for and retrieved with little effort. Further searches can then be – and were – carried out, seeking proximity to other open codes (e.g. epistemic discourse, open theorizing, micro-narrative, etc) or co-occurrence.

The unadorned preliminary list of ES<sub>p</sub> finds is appended here as illustration of the raw code-work at the start of more refined iterative searches.

## (A) EMBEDDED SPEECH WHOLE CORPUS(KWIK)

### BY (LINE) AND (SPEAKER)

<Esp B> = begin of embedded speech

.....  
(107)  
(87) (LALEH) so der | Lehrer sagt <ESp B> \* Ah da | schicken Sie ma  
(234) (LALEH) Lehrer | hat gesagt <ESp B> \* du kannst dich ruhig auf  
(240) (LALEH) F><N O><ABG><ABI> <ESp B> \* Meldet eure Kinder da |  
(252) (LALEH) | Lehrerin sagte: <ESp B> \* Du bist zu schade fuer  
(259) (LALEH) da hat er gesagt | <ESp B> \* Ok | soll sie <ESp E>  
(296) (LALEH) Eltern sagten: <ESp B> \* Ihr werdet zu fremd |  
(324) (LALEH) hat gesagt: | <ESp B> \* Ach Kurdisch ist | nicht  
(368) (LALEH) hat sie gesagt <ESp B> \* Nee dann schicken wir |  
(379) (LALEH) er hat gesagt: <ESp B> \* Wenn ihr | die | Zehnte  
(386) (LALEH) Mutter hat gesagt: <ESp B> \* Nein | meine | Tochter  
(396) (LALEH) hat sie | gesagt: <ESp B> \* das kommt vorrangig als  
(406) (LALEH) hat ja gesagt: <ESp B> \* Ich | mache | noch eins  
(416) (LALEH) Maedchen Junge <ESp B> \* du darfst nicht so oft |  
(422) (LALEH) wir haben gesagt: | <ESp B> \* Warum bevorzugst du ihn  
(425) (LALEH) | dann bewusst <ESp B> \* Wir duerfen ja keinen  
(590) (LALEH) der hat gesagt: <ESp B> \* Macht euch aus euch was!  
(615) (LALEH) einen auslachen! <ESp B> \* Bildet euch! Oder macht  
(632) (LALEH) kommt und sagt <ESp B> \* Bildet | euch! <ESp E>  
(669) (LALEH) Lehrern | erzaehlt: <ESp B> \* Ja so habe ich eine  
(671) (LALEH) <ESp E> Und dann: <ESp B> \* Ja wo <QI B> <ESp E> |  
(674) (LALEH) und haben gesagt: <ESp B> \* LALEH ich | wuerde | dir  
(682) (LALEH) | sie das <QI B> <ESp B> \* Wir wollen nicht dass du  
(875) (LALEH) | gesagt habe da <ESp B> \* ich will Kaufrau werden  
(876) (LALEH) werden <ESp E> | <ESp B> \* Eh <QI B> Was ist | das  
(911) (LALEH) sie hat gesagt: | <ESp B> \* Das ist eure Zukunft!  
(918) (LALEH) Die haben gesagt: <ESp B> \* Das ist deine | eigene |  
(928) (LALEH) der Vater gesagt: <ESp B> \* Ich will | nur | Einsen  
(943) (LALEH) hat gesagt: | <ESp B> \* Gib denen mal mehr  
(972) (LALEH) | haben uns gesagt: <ESp B> \* Im naechsten Jahr ist  
(982) (LALEH) uns | so angeguckt: <ESp B> \* Da kriegt man solche was  
(984) (LALEH) sagte er | <QI B> | <ESp B> \* faulen Hunde oder so  
(1010) (LALEH) er hat gesagt: | <ESp B> \* diese | Klasse haette  
(1166) (LALEH) dann gesagt hatte <ESp B> \* Da ist so eine Firma die  
(1257) (SARA) | hat er gesagt <ESp B> \* Ja seid ihr damit |  
(1261) (SARA) nie gesagt: | <ESp B> \* Ihr musst das und das  
(1290) (SARA) der sagt | immer <ESp B> \* Ja wenn du das willst in  
(1296) (SARA) also <ESp B> \* Heute hatten wir | den |

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(1370)	(SARA)	Vater sie sagt:	<ESp B>	• Ja heute war der   oder
(1412)	(SARA)	ich gedacht:	<ESp B>	* Gut dann bin ich
(1457)	(SARA)	sich gesagt:	<ESp B>	* Gut   meine ganzen
(1461)	(SARA)	hat   gesagt:	<ESp B>	* Gut da gehe ich fuer ein
(1592)	(SARA)	ich gedacht:	<ESp B>	* Gut da mache ich die
(1625)	(SARA)	haben   gesagt:	<ESp B>	* So jetzt will ich Geld
(1627)	(SARA)	<HES B> uhm	<ESp B>	* da mache ich meine
(1684)	(SARA)	Ich dachte:	<ESp B>	* Gut da gehe ich hin und
(1746)	(SARA)	nachher:	<ESp B>	* Ich will   ja  Marketing
(1809)	(SARA)	der sagt:	<ESp B>	* SARA du   bist so und
(1965)	(SARA)	und denkt:	<ESp B>	* Wenn   ich jetzt noch
(1986)	(SARA)	und ist ja so:	<ESp B>	* Azubi dem sollte man
(1999)	(SARA)	ich   gesagt:	<ESp B>	* Naja bei mir wird es
(2030)	(SARA)	denke ich immer:	<ESp B>	* Ja es liegt ja   nicht
(2057)	(SARA)	immer denken:	<ESp B>	* Warum soll ich das
(2065)	(SARA)	mitgegeben haben	<ESp B>	* Das sind die wichtigen
(2091)	(SARA)	gefunden	<ESp B>	* Ich weiss gar nicht wie
(2097)	(SARA)	mir und sagte:	<ESp B>	* Oh   nein! Sie fangen so
(2102)	(SARA)	gesagt   haben:	<ESp B>	• Ach du kommst dahin! Bei
(2107)	(SARA)	und sagte:	<ESp B>	* Frau Grant ich muss
(2109)	(SARA)	und gesagt:	<ESp B>	* Also   wenn Sie die
(2114)	(SARA)	und sagen:	<ESp B>	* Du   es liegt nicht an
(2213)	(CAROLA)	ich mir gesagt	<ESp B>	* also ok probiere aus
(2269)	(CAROLA)	gesagt	<ESp B>	* von Ihnen wird ein
(2359)	(CAROLA)	sind <PAUSE L>	<ESp B>	* nee <ESp E>   die
(2360)	(CAROLA)	E>   die sagen	<ESp B>	* das ist nichts fuer
(2457)	(CAROLA)	als   muesste man	<ESp B>	• Danke <ESp E> sagen
(2538)	(CAROLA)	dann auch gesagt	<ESp B>	• ich mache   Marketing
(2640)	(CAROLA)	ich hab' gesagt	<ESp B>	• ich moechte das nicht
(2675)	(CAROLA)	also eher so	<ESp B>	* ich kann nicht so viel
(2719)	(CAROLA)	erstmal gedacht	<ESp B>	• ich schaffe das gar
(2790)	(CAROLA)	wollten -   <SE B>	<ESp B>	* Ja Amen   und Tschuess
(2804)	(CAROLA)	El- Mutter sagte	<ESp B>	• wenn sie   mich in
(2854)	(CAROLA)	so die   Frage	<ESp B>	* moechtest du was essen
(2939)	(CAROLA)	gefragt	<ESp B>	• wo   das herkommt und
(2997)	(CAROLA)	zu   <UW> gesagt	<ESp B>	* OK du musst einfach
(3002)	(CAROLA)	und   gesagt	<ESp B>	* du siehst bestimmt auch
(3097)	(CAROLA)	hab dann gesehen	<ESp B>	• OK <EXH S>   danach
(3119)	(CAROLA)	ich hab gesagt	<ESp B>	* ich   will das
(3126)	(CAROLA)	weil sie sagten	<ESp B>	• man soll es einfach
(3166)	(CAROLA)	haben gesagt	<ESp B>	* Faulenzen ist eine
(3169)	(CAROLA)	F><N D><ABG>	<ESp B>	* du schmeisst das Geld
(3171)	(CAROLA)	nicht   <PAUSE S>	<ESp B>	* du willst nur Faulenzen
(3183)	(CAROLA)	nicht mal sagen	<ESp B>	* hast du   gut gemacht
(3432)	(CAROLA)	kann nicht sagen	<ESp B>	• ich mache das jetzt
(3435)	(CAROLA)	kann nicht sagen	<ESp B>	* ich lerne jetzt nicht
(3695)	(CAROLA)	nicht   irgendwie	<ESp B>	* nee ich mache es nicht
(3853)	(CAROLA)	nicht gefragt	<ESp B>	* so und so was   fange
(3934)	(TORSTEN)	da   einem ein	<ESp B>	* ach ja zu dem Thema
(3969)	(TORSTEN)	<HES B> uhm	<ESp B>	* ja da war ich jetzt
(4011)	(TORSTEN)	aellt und  sagt	<ESp B>	* ja hallo ich moechte
(4065)	(TORSTEN)	mir selber sagen	<ESp B>	* Ja mein gott was wie
(4072)	(TORSTEN)	an sagt dann auch	<ESp B>	* ich sage dann p
(4313)	(TORSTEN)	unterhalten wir	<ESp B>	* p   ihr seid   ja

For a full discussion of the extensive query functions in TACT see Lancashire (1996: 52-71).



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(B) MARIE: LIST OF CATEGORY CODES

(open coding and automatic coding function in ATLAS.ti)

HU (Hermeneutic Unit): Melanie 08

-----  
Codes-Primary-Documents-Table  
-----

Code-Filter: All  
PD-Filter: All

	PRIMARY DOCS		
CODES	1 Totals		
-----			
*Focussed Network on	31	31	multiple sorts by co-occurrence
*Narratives	26	26	
*Pos2 + Ntve	26	26	
TopR	1	1	topic re-orientation
1Pos	9	9	first position (questioning)
Acc	6	6	account
AssD	3	3	asymmetrical discourse
AssID	3	3	asymmetrical institutional discourse
Co-S	12	12	co-selection
Conc	22	22	concessive
DisConc	2	2	dispreferred concessive
DX	3	3	deixis
Epc	2	2	epistemic
Epc Dis	4	4	epistemic discourse
ESp	4	4	embedded speech
Eval	6	6	evaluation
FTA	5	5	face-threatening acts
Gen	3	3	generalization
HES PAUSE	2	2	hesitation pause
HGE	2	2	hedge
Index	2	2	indexicality
IndQu	1	1	indirect question
InstDis	8	8	institutional discourse
InterAcc	4	4	interpretive account
KnoCl	2	2	knowledge claim
KnoClAss	4	4	knowledge claim asymmetry
LB	1	1	learning biography
LD	3	3	learning discourse
MDL	2	2	modal
NarrIntrEv	1	1	narrative introduction and evaluation
NOr	1	1	narrative orientation
Ntve	23	23	narrative
OQu	1	1	open question type
OrSett	5	5	orientation setting
PaliEm	6	6	paralinguistic emphasis
Pass	1	1	passive
Pos2	3	3	second position (answering)
Ref	1	1	referentiality
RespRes	5	5	respondent resistance
SIR	1	1	self initiated repair
SR	7	7	self repair
Top	2	2	topicalization
TopRe	1	1	topic reorientation
TopSU	2	2	topic set-up
-----			
Totals	265	265	

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(C) MODAL PARTICLES AND HEDGING DEVICES

(see Chapter 6)

In Chapter 6, results of corpus searches for the use of verbs of modality and for frequent modal participles (MPs) are given. Using the search functions of MonoConc to comb through the corpus of 7 sub-corpora for instances of MPs and hedging devices is a relatively straightforward job. For three clearly frequent MPs - '*halt*' (like, sort of, so, you know, etc.), '*eigentlich*' (actually, in fact, really, etc.) and '*irgendwie*' (somehow, sort of, like, a bit, etc.) the results for the whole corpus and for the individual respondents are given in the following table:

<i>Respondents</i>	No. of frequencies 'halt'	No. of frequencies 'eigentlich'	No. of frequencies 'irgendwie'
<i>Özlem</i>	57	6	8
<i>Torsten</i>	28	1	3
<i>Henry</i>	23	6	6
<i>Carola</i>	74	43	46
<i>Marie</i>	4	13	3
<i>Laleh</i>	0	10	20
<i>Sara</i>	1	17	10
<b>total</b>	<b>total</b>	<b>total</b>	<b>total</b>
39,969 words	187	96	96

In a casual way the striking surface disparity between the use *Özlem*, *Carola* and *Torsten* make of '*halt*' and that of the others (especially *Laleh*'s complete avoidance of this type of hedging device in favour, it seems at first glance, of the more equivocal-descriptive '*irgendwie*') may be observed. At a second glance, it is above all *Carola*'s fairly massive use of all three MPs (in this version of the entire corpus, it needs to be added) which excites interest.

Remembering the warning expressed by Kelle (see above Chapter 3) regarding the danger of confusing the index-function of this type of raw quantitative material and what it may 'really' represent, it seems prudent to suggest that these data certainly deserve to be considered in greater detail and their relation to the discoursal function of hedging and modality needs to be carefully explained.

## APPENDIX 2

### *Transcription and presentation*

The transcription method I opted to use is mixed and less than CA-standard. I aimed to provide a full transcript which is as detailed as possible for each interview. More or less full CA-standard details are provided only for those sections of interviews subject to full CA-type analysis and presented as such. The requirements of preparing transcripts for text analysis with TACT or ATLAS.ti/MonoConc mean that over-complex transcription tags must correspond to the software requirements of the programmes used. This excludes heavy text-formatting as TACT and ATLAS.ti require basic text-files and are unable to handle all symbols without excessive confusion (e.g. the symbols < or > are reserved in TACT for main tags and headers, special symbols like ascending arrows for rising tones are cumbersome, etc.). In effect, each interview was prepared in a number of different formats: page-presentation quality, CA quality, software-compatible.

Finally, a series of alternative presentation options should at least be mentioned: ultimately the analysis or level thereof that is required dictates whether an interview transcript is presented whole, as a CA-transcript in order to interpret the sequential construction of meaning through turn-taking and repairs, as a simple paraphrase for simplest content reporting, as a so-called 'topical assembly' - a type of collage of topics and themes serving the aims of the analysis, as straightforward line-by-line interpretation, or alternatively in the form of a grammatical rendering or cultural script (Rehbein 1989; Goddard and Wierzbicka 1997).

---

### Sample extract (*Marie*)

The transcription extracts presented below are illustrative not constitutive of my explanations or my analysis (Mason on this 1996:143-144). Some transcription options will be of use here to illustrate some of the consequences of deciding for one or another of the almost infinitely available transcription methods. The process of *inscription* is best made manifest by playing through a number of theoretically significant variants.

#### Orthographic transcript:

The following short extract from the beginning of the transcript (TS) of the interview carried out with the student *Marie* in autumn 1999 is given as a conventional piece of prose, organised as speech, as in a printed theatrical piece. This signifies that full stops and commas, hyphens and dashes are placed intuitively where the transcriber believes sentence breaks to be located, and thereby suggests a direction to the supposed intentional meaning of the speakers. No information about speed, pitch, stress, breathiness, pausing, hesitation or overlap is provided. For the translation - intuitive and provisional, see Extracts 4.1 and 4.2. The overall effect of the TS method opted for in each case achieves a certain visual and semiotic effect without the need for a translation. The impression is clearly of compact, intentional speech; pauses are absent, meaning making is presumably transported in the finished rhetorical forms of grammatically 'correct' speech. The text produced is an ethnocentric script overlaid with written language stylistic forms. The speaker is the interviewer (i.e. R= myself).

R: Ja:, das Thema ist eigentlich heute im grossen und ganzen Bildungsgeschichte und wie ja, wie es gelaufen ist? Von der Schule zur Uni. Warum diese Wahl und jene Wahl getroffen worden ist oder dieses Fach, oder ein anderes oder was war dabei wichtig, nicht? Oder was war gut oder was war schlecht. So, wenn wir jetzt anfangen mit einem paar Angaben zur Person ...

Transcription Extract 1 Marie 10/99

APPENDIX 2

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**The modified orthographic version: first step**

Here, the same piece of TS is given with the added information regarding pauses, and breathiness. Hesitation is indicated within the text as 'uhm'. Full stops and commas have been removed, the text is continuous. As a potential CA TS, not to speak of a 'cultural script' (Goddard and Wierzbicka 1997), the TS still leaves practically everything to be desired. Nevertheless, the information regarding pauses indicates a less than perfect rhetorical delivery and begins to allow some interpretation of possible turns, repair work and the conversational partner begins to appear in the missed turns.

R: Ja: (pause) das Thema ist eigentlich heute uhm (pause) im grossen und ganzen Bildungs:geschichte (pause) und wie (pause) ja wie es gelaufen ist? von der Schule zur Uni (pause) warum diese Wahl und jene Wahl getroffen worden ist oder dieses Fach oder ein anderes oder was war dabei wichtig nicht? oder was war gut oder was war schlecht (pause) so wenn wir jetzt anfangen mit einem paar Angaben zur Person

Transcription Extract 2 Marie 10/99

**The modified orthographic version: next steps**

Here the pauses are given as natural breaks in the speech and some indication is given as to pause length (one dot between brackets as opposed to two dots, denoting pauses of something like a couple of tenths of a second).

R: ja: (..) das Thema ist eigentlich heute uhm (..) im grossen und ganzen Bildu:ngsgeschichte (..) und wie (..) ja wie es gelaufen ist? von der Schule zur Uni (..) warum diese Wahl und jene Wahl getroffen worden ist oder dieses Fach oder ein anderes oder was war dabei wichtig nicht? oder was war gut oder was war schlecht (..) so wenn wir jetzt anfangen mit einem paar Angaben zur Person

Transcription Marie Extract 3

Going one step further, we get a line by line version which favours the analysis of turns and moves

## APPENDIX 2

R: ja: (..) das Thema ist eigentlich heute uhm (..) im grossen und ganzen Bildu:ngsgeschichte (..) und wie (..) ja wie es gelaufen ist? von der Schule zur Uni (..) warum diese Wahl und jene Wahl getroffen worden ist oder dieses Fach oder ein anderes oder was war dabei wichtig nicht? oder was war gut oder was war schlecht (..) so wenn wir jetzt anfangen mit einem paar Angaben zur Person

### Transcription Marie Extract 4

A further step, and the following table-like presentation (which has been used throughout here in the presentation of extracts for analysis)

Modified CA version underlines the utterance-by-utterance, turn-by-turn progress of talk and allows a translation (a very rough intercultural approach to the meaning-making) to be provided.

1	R:	Ja:	yes
2		(..)	(..)
3		das Thema ist eigentlich heute uhm	the topic today is really uhm
4		(..)	(..)
5		im grossen und ganzen Bildu:ngsgeschichte	basically education career ((drawn out))
6		(..)	(..)
7		und wie (..) ja wie es gelaufen ist? von der Schule zur Uni	and how (..) it went? from school to university
8		(.)	(.)
9		warum diese Wahl und jene Wahl getroffen worden ist	why this choice and that choice was made
10		oder dieses Fach oder ein anderes	or this subject or another one
11		oder was war dabei wichtig nicht? oder was war <u>gut</u> oder was war <u>schlecht</u>	or what was important right? or what was good what was bad
12		(..)	(..)
13		so wenn wir jetzt anfangen mit einem paar Angaben zur Person	so if we just begin with a few facts about yourself

### Transcription Marie Extract 5

## APPENDIX 2

The next extract model has been provided with timed pauses and more prosodic information has been included.

### CA-version: timed pauses, intonation

1	R: Ja:	yes
2	(8.0)	(..)
3	das Thema ist eigentlich heute uhm	the topic today is really uhm
4	(2.0)	(..)
5	im grossen und ganzen Bildungs::geschichte	basically education career ((drawn out))
6	(1.0)	(..)
7	<u>und</u> wie: (.) ja wie es gelaufen ist? von der Schule zur Uni	and how (..) it went? from school to university
8	(.)	(.)
9	warum diese Wahl und jene Wahl getroffen worden ist oder dieses Fach oder ein anderes oder	why this choice and that choice was made or this subject or another one
10	(.)	(.)
11	was war dabei wichtig <u>nicht</u> ? (.)	or what was important right? (.)
	oder was war <u>gut</u> oder was war schlecht	or what was good what was bad
12	(2.0)	(2.0)
13	so wenn wir jetzt anfangen mit einem paar (.) <u>Angaben</u> zur Person	so if we just begin with a few (.) facts about yourself

### Transcription Marie Extract 6

Transcription symbols employed generally for all corpus extracts are as follows:

(2.0) timed pause, in secs.

(.) untimed pause, approx. 0.2 secs.

: : Bildungs::geschichte - colons indicate prolongation of immediately preceding sound, the length of the row of colons gives a rough idea of the increased prolongation of the sound

{ } left braces indicate a point at which a current speaker's talk is overlapped by another's talk, right braces indicate where the overlapping

APPENDIX 2

finishes

= indication of rapid takeover without break or pause between speakers

Angaben underscoring indicates some form of stress, via pitch or amplitude

NEIN capitals, except at beginning of line and beginning of all nouns, indicates loudness

.hhh inbreath

hhh outbreath, or laughter as hehehe

( ) empty brackets indicate inability to hear what was said

(word) parenthesized words are possible hearings

(( )) double parentheses contain transcriber's remarks

+ ++ double crosses indicates talk that is faster than surrounding talk

° °° double degree symbols indicate talk that is noticeably softer than surrounding talk

? rising tone, question intonation

\_ indicates falling intonation



## **APPENDIX 3**

### **The "Audio-Tagebuch" – Audio Diary Flysheet**

# **Volunteers wanted!**

Im Rahmen einer Untersuchung über studentische "Lernbiographien" - also über den Ablauf von Schule, Ausbildung und / oder Studium aus der Sicht von Studierenden - suche ich Studentinnen u. Studenten der Wirtschaftswissenschaften, die bereit wären, über ihre Erfahrungen und Erlebnisse an der Uni Duisburg ein

Audio-Tagebuch

über einen längeren Zeitraum zu führen. ESIs und Lerngruppenangehörige sind hier vor allem angesprochen!

**5 "Tagebuch-Packs" sind im Fachschaftsraum  
zum Abholen bereit. Holt sie jetzt while  
stocks last.**

Wer Interesse hat und mehr darüber wissen möchte, kann mich unter

**[Rob.evans@uni-duisburg.de](mailto:Rob.evans@uni-duisburg.de)**

oder in meinem Kurs:

(Wirtschaftsenglisch für Wiwi (HauptStudium II))

Freitags 0915 - 12.30 im Raum MB 144

erreichen.

Ich würde mich freuen, wenn der Andrang riesig wäre. Ich freue mich genauso über jede(n) Einzelne(n).

Thanks

Rob Evans

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## AUDIO-DIARY NOTES FOR "DIARISTS"

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Sie haben sich bereit erklärt, ein Audio-Tagebuch zu führen. Vielen Dank.  
Hier ein paar wichtige Hinweise:

Sie sind vollkommen frei. Sollten Sie das Tagebuch aus irgendeinem Grund nicht führen können - sei es aufgrund eines technischen oder eines persönlichen Problems oder einfach, weil die Zeit dazu nicht reicht, usw, usf - dann lassen wir es so.

Ich möchte, dass Sie freiwillig aufs Band sprechen und wo und wann es Ihnen passt.

Das ist ja auch der Sinn der Sache.

Das "Tagebuch" soll das enthalten, was Sie spontan (so spontan mindestens, wie es geht) denken, empfinden, loswerden wollen.

Was Sie auf das Band sprechen, ist Ihnen überlassen. Folgende Themenbereiche könnten ggf. vorkommen:

- Was Sie von der Uni erwarten/was Sie an der Uni erwarten
- Was Sie erleben - 1.Woche, 2. Woche, usw
- Überraschendes, Bekanntes
- KommilitonInnen
- Lerngruppen
- Wann Sie studieren/lesen/feiern
- Eindrücke von der 'Uni-Welt'
- Lehrende, Umgang mit DozentInnen, Umgang mit dem Fachbereich
- Hoffnungen, Perspektiven, Pläne, Zeitpläne
- u.v.a. natürlich

Das Wichtigste ist: Ihre Aufzeichnungen werden absolut anonym behandelt und verwertet.

Aufs Band sollten Sie keine Angaben zu Ihrer Person (Name, Adresse, Telefon, usw.) machen. Es reicht, wenn Sie Ihr Geschlecht (klar), Alter, Geburtsort/Gegend, Wohnort jetzt, Fach, Semester angeben.

Zu einem späteren Zeitpunkt - wenn Sie ein Tagebuch abgeben - würde ich sehr gern mit Ihnen in einem Interview Ihre Aufzeichnungen besprechen. Aber das kommt später und Sie müssen es erst überhaupt machen wollen, bevor wir soweit sind.

Ich bedanke mich also schon jetzt bei Ihnen und hoffe, Sie finden Zeit und Ruhe, so dass Sie überlegen können, was Sie eigentlich zu erzählen haben

...

Und was geschieht mit Ihren Aufzeichnungen?

Viel Arbeit - das ist es, was daraus wird.

Und zwar werde ich jedes Audiotagebuch wortgetreu übertragen auf den PC ("Transkribieren"), damit ich dann der Text des Tagebuches mithilfe eines Textanalyse-Programms untersuchen kann. Untersucht werden inhaltliche Elemente (Themenkreise, Schlüsselbegriffe, biographische Elemente,

APPENDIX 3

erziehungswissenschaftliche Fragen, usw.) und die Sprache (keine Angst! - die Linguistik kommt der inhaltlichen Analyse zuhulfe hier).

Da Sie das Tagebuch vollkommen anonym führen (ich kann Ihnen eine neue Identität geben), kann niemand Ihre Aussagen kontrollieren oder massregeln. Ihr Tagebuch wird einzeln untersucht, aber es wird auch zum Bestandteil eines grösseren aus mehreren Tagebüchern (hoffe ich zumindest) bestehenden "Sprachkorpus". Das erlaubt dann eine breiter angelegte 'qualitative' Untersuchung des Sprachgebrauchs.

Ihr Tagebuch können Sie in einem Umschlag mit meinem Name darauf entweder bei mir persönlich abgeben (Freitags 930-1200 MB 144)

oder in die Uni-Post werfen mit der Uni-Adresse:

Rob Evans (AT) c/o Romanistik/Italianistik

Oder mich e-mailen unter [rob.evans@uni-duisburg.de](mailto:rob.evans@uni-duisburg.de)

Alles klar? Ich hoffe, ich habe alle Ihre Fragen beantwortet. Wenn nicht, sprechen wir weiter.

Rob Evans Okt 99

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